

You don't live the Christian life,
Christ does.

Matthew Endres

Galatians 2:20 NKJV — “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Editor Notes

This chapter is just scattered notes that will help me (the author) in organizing the book. The next chapter, "Thoughts to add somewhere" contains thoughts that I may place in the book, though I have not decided where yet. The real book begins with the third chapter "The fall of mankind."

This book was written using Google Docs. Since its length caused it to slow down, I split the book into 2 documents.

This is definitely not the final version of the book. But, I want to have something "out there", even if there is still more to be done on it.

I want to name the book "You don't live the Christian Life, Christ does."

Or, if it must be cut shorter, call it,

Christ lives the Christian Life. ... (not you).

Only Christ can live the Christian Life

Christ alone lives the Christian life

The Power of Grace.

The Glory of the New Covenant.

Christ in you, the new covenant.

Within each chapter, I may have subsections with their own title, header.

(Maybe take out.)

Who is this book for? Those that know something is not right in their Christian walk, those that see in the Bible what the Christian life *can* look like but realize that they aren't seeing it happen in their own life, those who know there is something more to Christianity than what they are seeing.

And it is for those who have come to the end of themselves, who say, "I don't find the inner resources for me to live the Christian life." Jesus wants to become your source and your strength. But you may have to come to the end of yourself first, before you see Him as such.

Do you at least have a *desire* to know the Lord deeper, to be submitted to Him? Do you *want* to love Him with all of your heart? Is there a spiritual hunger in you? Then read on.

We all know the Bible is divided between a New Testament and an Old Testament. And we all know that the New Testament tells how Jesus came and offered His life for the sins of the world. We know the new testament well, and we should. But the old testament is about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Bible. How many of us know what the point of the old testament was? How many of us know how the old and new testaments fit together to form one Bible? The Bible is God's redemption plan for mankind. After Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin entered the world. And death entered because of sin. Mankind has been laboring to redeem himself ever since. One of my goals is that you would see, the old testament was written to show all of humanity that they have a sin problem. It is deep. And nothing they do, not any form of government, nor the best religion in the world is going to change them. That's what the old testament shows us. God Himself will have to change our heart, and He promises in the old testament that He will do this in the new testament through Christ. The old testament shows, there is nothing "you" can do that will defeat your sinful nature. But when Jesus Himself lives in you and controls you, *then* you will live in victory.

Do you ever ask yourself, "what is the point of the Old Testament?" About $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Bible is the Old Testament. If the majority of the Bible is the old testament, then it's probably important to know why it is there.

The old Covenant was the best religion that the world had before Jesus. God made a covenant with Abraham to give him the land of Israel. And then for the next 400 years his descendants became slaves in Egypt. Then God raised up Moses and delivered them out of Egypt. And while they were in the wilderness, God gave them the ten commandments and the law.

God always wanted to be the object of all of your love, affection, and worship. That is the problem I have with much Christian literature. They start off with a different foundation. They believe the purpose God created you for, is you. And therefore much of the literature is self-centered. But the Bible says

Colossians 1:16-18 NLT — for through him (Jesus) God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth.

He made the things we can see

and the things we can't see—

such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world.

Everything was created through him and for him. He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together. Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body.

He is the beginning,

supreme over all who rise from the dead.

So he is first in everything.

Jesus is the only one to perfectly love the Lord His God with all His heart, soul, and strength.

Jesus lived in His Father's sight. Everything He did was done for His Father and in relationship with His Father. The book of John mentions "Father" x times. He so lived in God's sight alone they said to Him, "You care not for any man for You regard not the face of man." It was like He did not see man, His eyes were so much on the Father.

Isaiah prophesied about Jesus and said, Who is blind but My Servant?

If you want a life to escape the flesh, both the religious flesh and the sinful flesh, then you must "live by faith in Jesus who loved you and gave Himself for you."

(Maybe take out.)

There is your body, your heart, and your spirit. You can do something about your body and to some extent you can do something about your heart. But every person is spiritually dead in trespasses and sins and they cannot do anything about that. But when they believe Jesus, they are buried with him in baptism and raised with him by the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, we are called to yield to the Holy Spirit. The Corinthians had been made alive by the Spirit, though they still had some sins going on.

Along those lines

Matthew 26:41 NKJV — "Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

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It's not about rules, it's about believing and yielding.

Read Crucified with Christ, and especially the section on the doctrine of depravity.

There is a fountain opened up. He wants a close relationship with us, but that can't happen if we have a guilty conscience.

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It's about fellowship, knowing, loving, trusting, obeying, and worshiping Jesus.

Or, it's about believing Jesus and then yielding to Him.

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Look at the kind of Christian life that can be yours. Acts 6 and 7 tell of a man named Stephen. He was not an apostle. He was a layman. But look at how God used him. ... This kind of Christian life can be *yours*. There's more.

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The Holy Spirit *IS* your inheritance in Christ. Esau despised his birthright and God rejected him for that. Maybe we haven't seen just how important our inheritance is. Maybe the presence of God in our lives ought to be the most cherished thing we have. Maybe God has a new life for you in the Holy Spirit that is more meaningful and satisfying than anything you have ever dreamed of. I believe all the statements in this paragraph are true, and it is the goal of this book to help you to enter life in the Spirit.

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To anyone who thinks salvation can be earned by doing this or that, I say, "The human spirit has been dead in sins ever since Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The only way we can go to Heaven is if we are born again by the Holy Spirit." Someone says "I believe Jesus, so I'm saved." I say, "The demons knew that Jesus was Lord, but it didn't result in any change of heart for them." Do you believe that Jesus loved *you*, that He took *your* sins on the Cross, that He washed the sin out of *your* heart, and that Jesus lives in *your* heart? Don't give me a theological "yes" to any of these questions. I am asking about your experience. Many people will miss Heaven because Jesus will tell them "I never knew you." Do you have *such faith* in the Cross that you have noticed He has washed you clean with His blood? If you are truly redeemed from your sins, it will show. No, you don't earn salvation by good works. But people that are saved will by their new nature *produce* good works. If you find yourself living in sin to the same degree as the rest of the world, I really question whether you are saved.

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The commands of the law are in themselves a shadow of the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Whereas the law *commands* you "Do not do this or that", the Holy Spirit will *cause* you to not do this or that. With the Holy Spirit, we *will* (by nature) obey the commands without needing to be *told* to keep the commands. Our desires have been changed, and we won't *want* to break the law.

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2 Corinthians 2:4 NKJV — For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears, not that you should be grieved, but that you might know the love which I have so abundantly for you.

The *goodness* of God leads you to repentance.

The point of the entire old testament is to show us that rules and human effort don't work. This is very humbling and deep, and it should not be forgotten. There is a very huge lesson here, if the majority of the Bible is to show us that even the best system of rules did not do anything to change our sinful nature. We need Jesus very badly. Apart from Him we can do nothing. Don't ever think your sins are too many. If so, you will be too scared to abide in Him because you won't trust Him. See that His love, forgiveness, and grace are infinite, and return to Him. Abide in His love and keep your closeness to Him.

I said to Chris, "We need to yield to the Spirit. There are verses about mortifying the deeds of the body by the Spirit. We are to become one spirit with Christ. He puts a new nature in us and it is our job to yield to it. So put on Christ. Put on things that belong to His character. Obey Him and take off the things that belong to your flesh. If you were to look inside the vine and the branches, they would look the same. You cannot tell where one begins and the other ends. So your inner man is also supposed to look just like His inner man. And then when you do something, no one will be able to tell if it was you or Christ in you that did it because your spirit has become so submitted and united to Christ that people won't see a difference between you and Christ. You will still be obeying, but you will do it with *Christ's* heart, sharing His sense of

pain, affection, compassion, etc. it's not that you are a robot controlled by Christ. You are alive but have been made like Christ in your inner man, with all His holiness and love. You have yielded to the Spirit and have molded your heart and inner man until it is the same as Christ's.

One thing is for certain: If anyone ever does become totally crucified with Christ, that person will have zero pride or ego. It's not them doing anything. They've been crucified. They don't walk by head knowledge, effort, striving or anything to do with works. So there is absolutely zero to boast about. They will be led by their heart or by the Spirit. And as such, their motive will be to love and glorify God. There is no pride there. But if their efforts, knowledge, and religious abilities were guiding them, these are the flesh, and they would boast that they did it all on their own. There is a big difference in doing something *with* God and *for* God. God isn't interested in what you can do *for* Him. But He does want you to humbly walk *with* Him. (verse). And *He* will bring the results.

6 or 7 times in Philippians 3, Paul says he died to the law, the flesh, and works, so that he might know Christ. We can now know Christ in a deep, personal, intimate way. He will be our strength and we will know His Voice. He is Living, speaking, and moving.

Do you love the Lord so much that you will die to this world, to the flesh, and to everything?

When you believe Jesus you become born again by the Holy Spirit. Your sinful nature is cut off, and the nature of Christ comes into you. But will you *yield* to that nature?

"Why doesn't God help me defeat sin?"

God seeks first of all the glory. And He is glorified primarily through faith. If you don't believe Jesus loves and forgives you, that is a dishonor to God. Even though He still wants you to defeat sin, He will allow you to struggle with it until you glorify Him by trusting what Christ accomplished for you on the Cross.

1 John 3:6 KJV — Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Jesus fulfilled the five types of sacrifices that were needed to give us fellowship with God. So He gets all the glory.

Hebrews 10. Psalm 40.

If we do this life, we get the glory. But God is jealous for His glory. (Go through Piper message).

We are all trying to get back to God. We know that eternal, satisfying life is found in God.

John 17:3 NKJV — "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

It's been in the heart of man to connect with God ever since Adam and Eve fell. But how do we get back?

The Tabernacle was a symbol of how to get back.

Yes, you do have a sin problem. And it goes even deeper than you realize.

Titus 3:3-8 NKJV — For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying ...

It's not enough to just hear that Jesus loves you. You need to *Believe* that Jesus' blood washed you from your sin. *Believe* He is your great High Priest, always interceding for you. *Believe* He loves you. And if you truly believe and trust what Christ has done for you, there will be a desire in you to *worship* Him and to honor Him who has loved you and died for your sins. Do not resist this desire. *YIELD* to it! *Yield* to the Holy Spirit by putting away your sin and by giving Jesus the praise and the glory.

Christ's finished work on the Cross is God's solution to your sin problem. And it becomes effective when you set your eyes on it and believe Jesus loved you personally so much that He washed your sinful nature away on the Cross. The Israelites had to look at the snake on the pole to be healed. You also must make the choice to say "On that Cross is where my heart was washed clean. I stand my ground on that. I die for that. All of Scripture points to the Cross as God's solution to sin, and I take it to be the solution for *my* sin."

Now, take a different identity in your heart. Don't look at yourself to see whether you still struggle with sin. Keep beholding Christ and the blood because that blood now speaks to you who you truly are.

I don't think "lessons" is the right word for this book. Maybe "life principles" would be better.

When you get alone with Jesus and restore your relationship with Him, no one will need to teach you any "lessons." You will *want* to do good.

The second thing I have to say is, there are *some* people who do need correction and teaching of what is and isn't sin. If you read the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul weaves gospel truth, with practical lessons on Christian behavior.

If you read the book of Ephesians, the first three chapters are gospel truth, and the next three chapters are about practical Christian living.

After the giving of the law, they quickly made an idol. They had seen the ten plagues come upon Egypt. They saw Mount Sinai on fire and smoking. They heard the Voice of God from the mountain. They greatly feared and quaked at the sight. But none of that changed them. They made an idol 40 days later.

(May change or take out).

Why does the new testament not say much about loving the Lord with all our heart?

Maybe that has been accomplished for us. Maybe we actually do love the Lord with all our heart and it is only a struggle with the flesh that we have.

“Do this. Do that. Do some other thing.” Friend, those ought to be the fruit of having a close relationship with the Lord. Yes, I am sure those are all wonderful things that you are teaching. But

Here I stand. Pg 183.

A single friar who goes counter to all Christianity for a thousand years must be wrong. It is certain that a single monk errs in his opinion which is against what all of Christendom has held for over a thousand years to the present.

1 Corinthians 15:10 KJV — But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

And the “nothing’s” of Jesus.

“Wow, God really came through for Jesus and Paul. But He won’t do that for me because I’m a sinner.”

There is so much selfishness in our lives, more than we like to admit. But we do not like to call it sin. The moment we call it sin, we become uneasy with the thought that our lives are flawed, we are broken, we have a tendency to sin, God isn’t happy with us, and it’s really hard to stop being selfish. They automatically feel it’s *condemnation* to point out that something isn’t right.

So we skip all of that and pretend like God is okay with how self-focused we are. “Afterall,” we say, “the activities we do in our self-centeredness are not a sin in themselves. So therefore, God must be okay with me spending lots of time on them.”

No. Maybe those activities really aren’t a sin in themselves. But there is the commandment, *the greatest commandment*, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind.” You cannot be selfish and keep the great commandment at the same time. You cannot be selfish and “Do all to the glory of God (1 Corinthians 10:31).”

The moment we call something a sin, we automatically think, “I am able to stop doing it, and God wants me to stop doing it.” But that is Not what the Bible has to say about sin. God does have a cure for sin (which we will get to), but it isn’t self-effort.

When I was young, I was a zealous Christian. I figured, if God was real, then He is worth going for with everything I’ve got! And with such zeal I was always asking inside “Tell me what to do. Tell me what to do. Tell me what to do. I want rules.” Churches didn’t bother to correct my misplaced energy. All they did was say “Oh, we’ll tell you what to do. Here’s a message! Come back next week and we will tell you more of what to do. And then more. And more. And more.” But if they had *rightly divided* the Word of truth, the Bible, they would have emphasized the Cross, the Blood, and the meaning of Christ’s final words “It is finished.” Had I truly understood “It is finished” my zeal would have gone from saying “Tell me what to do” to saying “Thank you Jesus! I worship You! I want to know You deeper.”

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There are a lot of Christian books out there with the message “Try harder. Do more. Pick yourself up by the bootstraps, and make something of your life.” And maybe they have a very motivating sound to them. But the Bible has a message of its own. Take a look at chapters in the Table of Contents because those chapter titles tell the message of the Bible. We have a Creator whom we are supposed to walk this life with. And this life will be empty until He occupies His right place in us.

I want to know the Lord. I want to be transformed into His Image. I want the same relationship with God that Jesus had. I want to know what it means to be selfless and holy on the inside. To me that is far more than any success or pleasure this world could bring.

Deep down, we are all searching. But what many of us don't know is that we are really trying to find our way back to God.

In a day where we find messages preached on every topic you can imagine, it is very important that we understand the Bible *rightly divided* (2 Timothy 2:15). Perhaps these messages are true. But, everything must have its proper place. We must keep the central message of the Bible the center of our learning. Otherwise Christianity becomes one large, confusing mess of teachings that no one can make sense of. This book will help you to *rightly divide* the Word of truth, the Bible.

I don't live my life by these messages. I live my life “by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” *That* is the guiding principle.

God sees *your heart*. Look how Jesus addressed the church at Ephesus. God doesn't want rules, but He does want love, Deut 30. The great commandment.

Stephen was full of faith. That's the answer. I imagine he was a great worshiper, giving all glory to Jesus all the time. Problems come our way. But believe. Don't turn to the strength of the flesh, of the mind. Be enthralled with Jesus. It's all Jesus.

Jesus' ministry happened right after He received *His inheritance*, the Holy Spirit. Only after this do we read about the miracles, signs, wonders, and preaching of righteousness that He did everywhere. The importance of this cannot be overstated.

John 1:33 NKJV — “I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’”

The Holy Spirit *remained* on Jesus. When Jesus came into the world, He had to learn, just like you and I.

Isaiah 7:14-16 NKJV — “Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel. “Curds and honey He shall eat, that He may know to refuse the evil and choose the good. “For before the Child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that you dread will be forsaken by both her kings. Jesus had to learn. And we do not see Him prophesying or knowing anything Supernatural until *After* the Holy Spirit came upon Him.

"If you truly believe you can't do this life without Me, then why don't you crucify all efforts of the flesh? And once they are crucified, then I will live this life in you, because you won't be able to take any of the glory, because it won't be you doing it. It will be Me."

You read Acts and you see men of conviction, men of authority, men who walked with God, men whom God used mightily. People were smote in their heart through their preaching. And God confirmed His word with signs and wonders following. Many repented at their words. Others persecuted them, but they remained true to the Lord.

I said, Wow. These people are living the Christian life. I want to become one such person that knows God and walks with God like they did. How do I do it? How do I get to this place where such wonderful things happen through me?

I believe many reading this know the feeling I'm describing. But to be honest, most of the preaching I hear in America is not helping to get to this place.

I look for people to follow, leaders and pastors in the church. And I'm sad to say, I find so much worldliness among many of them. The Apostle Paul said, "Follow me as I follow Christ." He loved the Lord with all of his soul, and he always maintained a close walk with Him. He was no liar when he said this. But if I follow many of the leaders I have seen in the church, they will lead me into loving the things of the world.

I have a burning question on the inside of me. It cries out: "How do I live the Christian life?" I see so few in the church that are living like what I see in Acts. But I believe it is possible to have this life and I want it. Some of us are more desperate for the answer to this question than others. With God it is good to be desperate. Being desperate is what made blind Bartimaeus shout out for Jesus even when the crowd around him told him to hush up. Jesus honored this act.

This book will help you answer that question. It is very based on the Bible. In fact, it is the Story of the Bible. God always had a redemption plan for man. His plan was "Christ in you, the hope of glory." We will spend rest of the book exploring this.

Thoughts to add somewhere

This chapter is not part of the book. It just has thoughts that I may insert inside other chapters of the book. The real book starts with the next chapter, "The fall of mankind."

I want to Thank:

- My parents for raising me in church
- Cecil Perry for bringing me to Chi Alpha, which led to me joining the Assemblies of God

- Yan Venter for his excellent book I Think God Likes Me, from which this book draws several themes
- Chris DeNight for encouraging me to put my teaching into a sermon, which became so long that I turned it into this book

This book would not be here without your influence on my life.

I don't think the church needs many more teachings about right behavior. They need to know how to put the whole Bible together. They need sound doctrine. As Jesus said, John 8:32 NKJV — “And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

This book will give you solid truth about the human condition and God's way of transforming people.

Add a chapter, Putting off the old, putting on the new?

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When I was a young Christian, I would ignore Ephesians 1-3 and Romans 1-11. Those chapters don't discuss practical steps to take to live the Christian life. I wanted rules and a list of things to do. But finally after sharing all that Jesus has done for us to forgive us and make us born again, Paul gets practical in Romans chapters 12-16. But please observe where the emphasis is. The first 11 chapters tell the state of humanity and what Christ did for us. This is the first part of the book, and definitely the largest part. Only after that is established does Paul talk about practical steps for us to take. But this is Not the focus in Christianity, as it would be in other religions. The point is what Jesus has done. *He* is our forgiveness and salvation.

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Compare the book of John with the sermons we hear today: Go to church, Love people, Don't lie, Forgive others, Be a good friend, Keep a positive attitude.

These all miss that Jesus is the center of everything. They could at least talk about Love the Lord your God with all your heart. Or they could talk about forsaking the world and being crucified to it, but they aren't doing that. Transformation comes by the Holy Spirit, by faith in Jesus. Even if they taught what the true Christian life looks like, there is still a problem with these messages. These make the assumption that *you are able to change your fallen human nature*. Just ask yourself if all the preaching in America is really making a difference. Wish about your own life? Sermons, even if they correctly preach holiness is, aren't going to change anyone's human nature. A person must be brought to the knowledge of their sinful nature, and then when they see what Jesus has done for them, they will be filled with such gratitude and love that they will shine the glory of Christ everywhere they go. No one will need to teach them a thing.

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Probably take out mentioning of I speak in tongues. Paul did not include tongues in Romans, even in chapter 12 where he discusses the gifts of the Spirit. I don't think all are ready for it.

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The centrality of Jesus. The mystery of creation. God wanted glory.

Colossians 1:15-18 NKJV — He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist. And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.

We fail to understand the magnitude of these statements. God isn't just a hobby. He isn't just someone you add to your schedule. He made you, and He upholds you. *He* wants to be your purpose and the center of everything you do.

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Some will say, “But there *are* lots of lessons in the Bible, even in the New Testament.”

Do we *yield* to what the Spirit is saying? We may need to be shown the way by others sometimes. We often resist Him without knowing it. Newcomers may not be able to discern right from wrong yet.

John 14:26 NKJV — “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 NKJV — For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, So if I have sinful thoughts, is it my sinful nature and I need faith, or do I need more discipline taking every thought captive to Christ? Is He saying “Grace” or “Try harder”?

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Add chapters

It Is Finished.

Circumcised

What *is* the Christian life?

Love God with our everything

Forgiven once for all.

It is all faith.

Then, Christ lives the Christian life

Hindrances to the Christian life.

Loving God with all your heart

After It is finished,

Circumcision - fulfilled

Day of Atonement - fulfilled

Sabbath Rest - fulfilled

All the rest - fulfilled

Add stories from my life of how God spoke to me and used me after I established my close relationship with Jesus. Will need to be better connected to Him first.

What *is* faith? Like many of you, I was taught that faith is to believe that God will give you something, and have no doubts about it.

I want to propose a new meaning.

Faith is believing that by the Cross of Jesus, we are accepted with the Father and have access to Him.

That was the missing step for me. Before you can truly believe and expect God to perform a miracle for you, you must first settle an even more important question: Does God forgive you on account of the sacrifice of His Son? If you can believe that God does forgive you, the your conscience will be clean. *Now*, your heart can expect Him to come through for you.

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I can't engage in many activities of this world. I can sense myself becoming "in the flesh" if I start to compromise somewhere. The natural flow of His grace stops. I become more aware of self, and less aware of God. For example, if a scantily clad woman shows up on the screen, I try to turn my head away immediately. If I don't, I feel His Presence leave. Now He doesn't *totally* withdraw from me, but we aren't as close as we were before she appeared on the screen. If an inappropriate thought of a woman pops in my head, I know I need to cast that thought out immediately. If I don't, the sweetness of His Presence will leave. Thank God, He has made a way for us to return to Him if we stray: We humbly confess to God that we sinned and we change our mind regarding it. We agree with God that what we did was wrong, and we will not set our heart on it again. He will always forgive.

But I fear many people *don't want* to give up their sin. Where there is a willing heart, there is a way to victory. But if a heart is hardened in sin, teaching about grace might not help. Those people need to repent of their ways. If necessary, perhaps discipline them (1 Corinthians 5:9-13). I can't give a rule on when or how strong to discipline or rebuke someone. The worse the sin is, the stronger I believe the discipline should be. If they seem indifferent about their sin, or like it's a small matter, then confront them, especially if they call themselves a committed Christian. One thing I've learned is, you don't need to punish every sin someone does. Sometimes showing grace *is* the best thing to do. It communicates unconditional love, and it may warm their heart to the point of believing that *they are loved*. And perhaps after tasting such love, they will see their sin was evil and empty and they won't do it anymore.

Yes, Jesus does love people, even in their intentional sin. A man in the Corinthian church had his father's wife. Paul instructed them to expel the man, and they did. But later that man repented, and Paul instructed them to welcome him back to the church, forgive him, and to affirm their love for him. Yes, I believe that man's soul was in danger while he was sinning. But God's love didn't stop for him. If God had quit on that man, He would never have brought that man to repentance, and He wouldn't have forgiven him.

It is still *very much possible* to go through the motions of church and worship, without Jesus actually directing any of it.

Matthew 15:8 NKJV — 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.

Such a church service may look just the same as a service where people are consecrated to the Lord. But the people will walk out the same way they came in, unless the Holy Spirit does something. Again,

John 6:63 NKJV — “It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing...”

This is why it is important, especially for leadership to have a close fellowship with the Master. They are the ones in a position to minister. And oh how they will be more effective in helping people if they themselves are in step with the Holy Spirit, for it is *He* who gives life. Apart from the Holy Spirit, we are flesh, and the flesh profits nothing.

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God loves us with perfect love.

God wants to be loved with perfect love.

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Which brings us to an important question:

Did God give us a new covenant because Israel *could not* keep the old covenant, or because Israel *could* keep the old covenant, but they chose not to?

To that I say, before the Holy Spirit came to us in the new covenant, mankind was but flesh. But that is a problem, “because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so” (Romans 8:7 NASB20).

God gave us a new covenant because Israel *could not* keep the law. To further add to this thought, look what effect the law had:

Romans 5:20 NKJV — Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound...

If giving Israel the law only *increased* their sins, then it was only a matter of time before they broke it.

They didn't “continue” in the law.

I believe much of the church disagrees with Paul's statement “the mind set on the flesh does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.” It is a profound statement and it deserves much consideration. There are only two options: the mind of the flesh, or the mind of the Spirit. Before believing Jesus, we did not have the Holy Spirit. We could only be the mind of the flesh. And in that state, our mind “does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so.”

Much of the church believes they *can* become subject to the law of God, if they try hard enough. The point of the old testament is to show you that, no, you can't. Now, you can become religious, you can become disciplined, or you can go through the motions. But God looks much deeper than these. Even if you do them, there will still be a nature in you to sin, to covet, to love things in your heart beside God, breaking the greatest commandment.

If you don't see your corrupt nature, you will think you “have it within you” to keep the law. You won't truly believe that you need Jesus. And so you won't see your need to always abide in Him.

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Add 2 documentaries from the Sentinel Group?

They yielded to Jesus

Crucify the flesh means both crucify the carnal flesh, AND crucify the religious flesh.

Galatians 2:19 — For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

A dead man doesn't keep the law. There was Never a law written for dead people. I died with Christ. The law no longer applies to me.

Note also the distinction between living to the law, and living to God. They are Opposite! You could not live to God in the old testament because you did not have the Holy Spirit to connect you with God's power, His commands, His love, His fellowship. There was a thick veil that stopped you from approaching the living God. But thanks be to God for the great love wherewith He loved us. He comes now to dwell deep inside of us, and now my spirit does indeed have communion with the living God.

Find more verses about this, ex from Ephesians.

Galatians 2:20 — I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

"Crucified with" is synestauromai.

It is perfect, passive, indicative. The perfect tense means completed once in the past, for all time.

I am Crucified, Once and for all!

His whole self needed to be crucified because there was no good in it. All my thinking outside of Christ likewise is a lie, a fantasy, proud, selfish, self-seeking, and fleshly. I just keep my eyes on Christ to be victorious. He is not here to shame me.

These sermons are "manageable." They don't ask anything difficult from us. They aren't threatening in terms of asking something from us that is uncomfortable or hard to do.

2 Timothy 2:4 NKJV — No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier.

The psalms where David confesses his sins. God was dealing with him by covenant.

If we don't see that God keeps us because of covenant, we won't understand that we are loved.

Psalms 131. David never took on himself anything too difficult.

I believe the reason we preach so much on what to DO is because Jesus has not yet become very real to US. And so, we preach what a "good Christian" should look like and tell people to try to be that way. Oh, if He were very alive in our bosom, we wouldn't preach "Do." We would preach "Jesus". We would be in love with Him. We would Want to tell others about Him.

Can I still preach against sin?

Romans 8:13 KJV — For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

Through obeying the Holy Spirit. Through yielding to Him. Through Him bearing fruit in you. Always say Yes to Him.

"Are you saying preachers should never preach any messages on fixing areas of your life that are out of place?"

No, I wouldn't go that far. If a preacher talks about some good virtue that you need to improve, then yes, keep that lesson in mind. But do not let it become the center of your life. Jesus and the finished work of the Cross, those are the center. Everything else you learn needs to should only Assist you in knowing the Lord deeper.

Friends, can we please try putting Scripture together as a whole? If a non-Christian were to attend most churches for a month, they would probably leave with the impression that Christianity is about learning a bunch of lessons.

But the Bible is not just one big book with a lot of lessons inside. It is God's redemption story of mankind. It is all woven together from cover to cover. But you would never know how all 66 books fit together by attending most churches. I am hoping this book you are reading begins to give you the big picture.

Of the carnal sins of the flesh, unbelief isn't in there. The list of sins is the depraved nature that we are all capable of. But unbelief is a condition related to your heart, not your carnal flesh.

Galatians 3:3 NKJV — Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

You no longer need to be confused about Christianity. Jesus has accomplished it all for you. Your job is to believe Him.

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Add from Crucified with Christ

Add from Sermons 2.

There is something called asceticism that is a philosophy of the world.

Def.

Colossians 2. No honor to the satisfying of the flesh.

There is a king of Judah that will illustrate some of the points I am making, King Manassah. He was the most wicked king in Judah and probably in the whole Bible. Mankind is capable of incredible evil. But God's love and forgiveness are even far greater. His sins were done in ignorance. If you are reading this book, you already believe in God and that God hates those sins. Manassah didn't know that. If "you" go and commit these sins it is an even worse evil because you know better.

Mark 9:42 NKJV — “But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea.

But Manassah led his *whole nation* into sin. God only knows how many souls were caused to stumble by Manasseh. Yet God didn't stop loving this evil man.

Include Joshua Milton Blahyi?

Sermons, "We must do this or that."

We have all heard of people that were in church for years. And then one day we heard that they either fell into some horrible sin, or they decided to quit going to church. We think, "How could this happen? They were in church for years and years where they learned that they shouldn't do this. Why didn't any of it stick?"

I want to Boldly say, "All of the best teaching will not change anyone." *You* don't change. You cannot be improved. Sinful flesh never changes. No matter how much teaching it receives, it is not going to change. It is far more stubborn than we realize. It *cannot* change it's nature to where it obeys God.

Romans 8:7 NIV — The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so.

You *cacacan* become religious. You can suppress the flesh. But you will be s Pharisee who behaves well while still being corrupt in

God's remedy is Faith in Jesus Christ. He is alive. He lives in Heaven and He lives in the hearts of men and women. Do you know Him? The reason temptation doesn't have a stronghold on me is because I am feeding on Jesus, whose body is true food, and His blood is true drink. And if temptation does come, my motive in saying No isn't that I would break a rule. The reason I say No is that I would have to cut off this wonderful relationship with Jesus. I would have to Leave Him to do whatever sin is tempting me. And yes, He is very loving and forgiving, but I don't want to grieve Him, even if only for a little while.

If people fall away, I don't think they were truly rooted deep in Christ.

Matthew 13:21 NLT — But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

Ephesians 3:17-19 KJV — That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.

And,

One day Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph. He responded

Genesis 39:9 KJV — There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?

"Teaching" also violates "It is finished." It suggests "No, it is Not finished. You still need to do this and improve that. You fall short." The people leave feeling condemned, even though the

preacher never said a word of condemnation to them. It is hard to have intimacy with Christ if you feel condemned.

In Acts, Jesus is called Savior twice. He is called Lord ninety times.

Labor to enter His rest. But we think "We can improve on that." Let's add teaching about all these other good virtues. And then we will be Super Christians, and God will be extra happy with us.

1. You can't improve the flesh. There is a dying (a rest) that you go through so that the Holy Spirit will have total control.

2. That is very boastful. God wants you to Humble yourself before Him because humility is the only real way to have a relationship with the Almighty.

Labor to enter His rest. Sabbath.

Frankly, most messages will indirectly go against this by saying "No. Let's not enter rest. Let's work on this, and next week we will work on that, and then this, and that. No, it is Not finished. I still need to fix all these parts of me."

It is finished. I am so scared of breaking the rules. But Christ already kept all the rules. And then He received the curse of breaking them. Everything in the law has been fulfilled. The point of the law was to condemn everyone. The law brought the ministry of condemnation. Jesus brought the ministry of righteousness.

If you don't see how religion itself was put to an end, if you don't see how right standing with God was already accomplished for you, if you don't learn what "It is finished" means.

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Most messages I hear do not focus on the centrality of the Cross. They talk about virtues that are good. But

"The nation of Israel that exists today isn't engaging in idolatry. They are keeping the old covenant."

The religious leaders in Jesus' day weren't bowing down to idols either. But Jesus gave them some strong rebukes so that they might acknowledge that even with their best efforts, they still sin, they still have a sinful nature, and they need a Savior just as much as anyone else.

I wanted a list of actions to take so that I would know that at every moment I am in the will of God and that I am living the Christian life. I was zealous for sure, but not in a right way. I wasn't eager to know the one who is Himself the Source of all life. Christ on a very deep, intimate level. All the messages I listened to were about something that I should "Do" to become a better Christian. "Work on this. Stop doing that. Start doing this."

Martin Luther called the Catholic Church the tormenter of consciences.

Do you look at how much of the gospels is Jesus healing people? If you have read the four gospels, you know that Jesus performed many miracles, especially of healing. You might expect the gospels to focus more on what Jesus taught than on all the healings He did. But actually, His healing ministry is spoken of more than the things He taught. (Confirm if this is true.) Might it be, that the greatest thing Jesus could do for you isn't to teach you, but to point you to Himself? What greater way to do this, than to give you a healing that you will Never forget. Jesus said "I AM the way, the truth, and the life." He said "I AM the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." A healing will point you to Jesus, and it will give you assurance that He loves you. It will motivate you to worship Him and to press deeper into knowing Him. Healings show you His love, His glory, His power, His holiness, and they draw people to Him, the true Source of spiritual life. Yes, Jesus was a great Teacher of holiness. But Moses was also a great teacher of holiness.

Maybe take out.

1 Timothy 1:8-10 NKJV — But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine,

Maybe take out. Use 1 Timothy 1:8-10 instead.

Does this mean we cast off and ignore all the messages we hear on Christian behavior? No, Paul told Timothy,

2 Timothy 3:15-17 NKJV — ... From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work. Look closely here. How does salvation come? "Through faith which is in Christ Jesus." That is the main point that Scripture bears witness to. Every person themselves must come to trust the Lord Jesus and His work on the Cross. But there are also other uses. Scripture "is profitable for doctrine" such as the doctrine that I am presenting in this book. I won't get into many discussions of doctrine because I don't think they are so important that I want to argue about them. But, the doctrines of inheriting a sinful nature from Adam, and the blood of Christ being the only agent to wash the sin out, these two doctrines are *key* to fully releasing your life to Christ for Him to live it in you.

Paul says that Scripture is also useful "for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." And indeed many people need to be told that certain behaviors are sin. If it wasn't in the Bible what sin is, then we would have no authority to command them to stop. I want to note again, salvation doesn't come through trying to keep the rules in Scripture. Salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ. Scripture does help to give us discernment between good and evil. It is useful for correcting and rebuking people. But what saves and transforms people is "faith which is in Christ Jesus."

John 8:23 NKJV — And He said to them, "You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."

Acts 7:51 NKJV — "You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you."

King Manassah. I frankly don't understand why his story isn't more well-known. I was listening to Franklin Graham one day as he shared about King Manassah and I never forgot what he said. I believe he has the biggest redemption story in the whole Bible.

It's so easy for me to criticize the church. But God loves her, even with all the problems and sins she has.

Manassah "humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers." God was moved by this and brought him back to being king.

A lot of us have problems believing that God could love a person who is very sinful. We make the mistake of trying to help people by convincing them that they are good, they aren't that bad. But really the heart is deceitfully wicked and who can know the depths of its depravity? How about pointing people to a loving God? God loves everyone. God loves even the worst of sinners. Jesus never told anyone that they were too sinful for him. In fact Jesus was called the friend of sinners. How about making people feel good that there is a loving savior and that knows the fullness of our condition and he loves us the same?

After all, God wants himself to be our confidence. But if we tell people they are good enough, then they will place confidence in themselves and not in God.

I have learned to accept that my flesh will always be flesh. But I have a loving father whose grace has never run out. He will always be with me. He will always keep his covenant. Why should I feel bad about myself when God is on my side?

Not only does Nicodemus appear to live a clean life on the outside. But, unlike the other Pharisees, Nicodemus was also *sincere*. Yet Jesus said him also, You must be

Believe. One practical application of this is, Don't get bogged down in the details. Even writing this book, I have so many thoughts of how to organize this material, what to include, how to best express my thoughts, and so on. But I have to trust that God will use what I've written, that He will still speak through me even though I'm not perfect, and that He is guiding my decisions on what to include. All I can do is flow and write down *by faith* what I believe is important. I can't *know for sure* that every word I have here is the will of God. I just go with my heart, and I leave it at that.

2 Corinthians 3 and 2 Timothy all Scripture

When I was in tenth grade I decided to read through the New Testament. Eventually I made my way to the book of Galatians. I read chapter 2 and I read verses 14-21 and I could not believe what I read. In particular, verse 21 was a large shock to me.

Galatians 2:21 NKJV — "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

This is one of the few passages in the Bible that struck me so hard the first time reading it that I remembered the experience. I wanted to jump through the ceiling in my total shock at what I just read. The Bible, God's holy word, was actually telling us *Not* to use the law contained in it as a means to having a right standing with God. I didn't know the Bible could speak against using itself. We know Paul was the greatest of all the apostles. Wasn't holy Paul supposed to *encourage* us to keep the law? All the preaching I've ever heard would make you think yes. But in verses 14-21 Paul shares how he *died* to the law. And how many preachers ever said *anything* about dying to the law? None! Zero! If Paul is right and I am supposed to be dead to the law, isn't this a big matter? Isn't this worth preaching about – a lot? I will take it a step further and say, Isn't this *fundamental to Christianity*? I had grown up in church my whole life and never heard this! These days I am about 20 years older than when I first read that passage. I have studied the whole Bible a lot more. Certain passages you have to be careful with because you need to interpret them correctly and place them in the right context. But with this verse, I have only grown firmer in my conviction that Paul means exactly what he says. Christianity is entirely lived by faith. If you add works, rules, or human effort to it, you are actually getting in God's way. The flesh has nothing to contribute to the Christian life. God wants us to walk in the fullness of the Holy Spirit and that happens by faith. The flesh needs to be cut out of the picture. Yes Paul was the holiest apostle. But it wasn't because he tried hard to keep the law. It was actually *the opposite* reason. He came to discover it's not him to be able to keep the law (see Romans 7:14-25). So he placed his faith in a loving Master, whose death and resurrection would be accounted to Paul for righteousness. This released Paul from worrying about whether he was keeping the rules. And now his concern is to know and live for God. Let me show you how the Message puts it.

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Put at the beginning, yes we believe a human is body, soul, and spirit. But Paul lumps all three of those into the word "flesh."

1 Corinthians 1:27-29 — But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, that no flesh should glory in His presence.

"Oh, but Matthew, all sorts of great discoveries and inventions have been made from non-Christians. What do you mean we can do nothing apart from Christ?"

God sees the heart. He is concerned with our faith and love. The world prioritizes knowledge, abilities, skills, and talents. But these do not impress God, who is the Creator of all these.

Combine with Deut passage about holy law.

Romans 7:12 NKJV — Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.

Believing glorifies God because it is with the *heart* that one believes.

Knowledge puffs up because it is with the *head* that one knows something.

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Some pastors scream and shout frequently at the congregation. It can be frightening. They are usually trying to get the congregation more involved by getting them to shout "Hallelujah!" or "Praise the Lord!" or "Amen!" or something like that. There is a fear, that if you don't join along, the pastor will be angry at you.

But by the finished work of the Cross, I am totally loved and accepted by God Himself. If the preacher gets angry because I'm too quiet for him, I remember that God will never get angry with me. God took out all of His anger on Jesus so that He can freely love me now, whether I shout or stay silent. And with Almighty God pledging to love me, I care much less whether the preacher is angry with me.

These preachers are usually men of God that preach right things. But they put a pressure on the people to perform, and I don't think God would put that pressure on us.

It is finished.

Leviticus 16.

Hebrews 10. Perfected forever. Tetelestai.

Perfect "in His sight."

End of Romans 7. Paul already knew that coveting was wrong. He probably heard many sermons about it. But they weren't helping. A lot of messages today preach against sin. And we have all noticed that it doesn't always help. By believing, trusting Jesus, Paul found that sin *drops off*. It gets *cut off*. Paul discovered that Christ *IS* his circumcision from sin that he was looking for! Jesus *Loves you*. He freely gives you His blood to wash the sins out of your heart. But you have to make the conscious decision that you are going to *Believe* that He loves you and that his blood cleanses the sin out of you.

Flesh cannot live the Christian life. Flesh needs to die. *All* of the flesh needs to die, even as foreskin is *completely cut off* the and as a person getting baptized is *completely buried* in water.

Self-help is wrong because of a guiding principle, All glory be to God.

Idolatry is a *major* problem in the old testament. They turn to literal idols, statues made of wood to look like humans or animals.

But what about the new testament? Are idols spoken about? What are they?

The reason I talk about is because *Christ* wants to live all of this life in you. But if there are still areas of flesh in you, then *you* are still living those parts of you. If Christ is going to live this life in you, then everything that is of *you* needs to be

If an unbeliever comes to church, will they leave saying "This is the glory of God!"? They might say, "I heard a lesson I can try to manage into my life. But there wasn't really anything amazing, that captured my awe, that made me say 'This is the power of God.'" Hopefully at least the people were loving and you could see a good heart in them.

How about presenting the Great and glorious God and tell about His works? They preached Jesus everywhere they went.

I used to think that Jews and Christians are very similar. I thought Christians or the same as Jews but they added Jesus into the picture. But as I study the scriptures, I discover that Christianity is separate from Judaism. The Jews are trying to keep the law till this very day. Christians have died to the law so that we can follow Jesus by the Holy Spirit. Keeping the law is not my concern. Knowing the Lord Jesus and exalting him higher and higher that is my concern.

Your loyalty in the new covenant is not to the law. It is to Jesus. Will you worship and honor Him? Will you love Him with all your heart? He showed His incredible love for you on the Cross, taking away your sins and purchasing eternity in Heaven for you. Will you be thankful every day for this gift? you make Him your King?

You think *you* can do what Christ did? Zacchaeus was a tax collector, and they were known to keep some of the taxes they collected for themselves.

Luke 19:2 NKJV — Now behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.

Luke 19:7 NKJV — But when they saw it, they all complained, saying, “He has gone to be a guest with a man who is a sinner.”

Luke 19:8 NKJV — Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.”

No one had converted Zacchaeus before Jesus. But how did He do it? Did He use miracle power to change Zacchaeus’ heart? No. Did He think of a great speech that impressed him with its grandeur? No.

John 14:24 KJV — He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

Legion

Matthew 12:22 NKJV — Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

He was blind. The power of persuasion or great intellect, or great oratory cannot heal blindness. These works are *too high* for any mere human to do.

The sacrifice of Jesus is of such great power and importance that it is pointed to throughout all of the old testament.

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Galatians 3:12 NKJV — Yet the law is **not** of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

It is all by faith.

The Bible has much to say about faith. The word “faith” is in the King James Version 239 times. The word believe is also there 239 times. That is a lot.

God Longs for Faith!

Numbers 14:11 NKJV — Then the LORD said to Moses: “How long will these people reject Me? And how long will they not believe Me, with all the signs which I have performed among them?”

Matthew 17:17 NKJV — Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.”

1 Peter 1:6-7 NKJV — In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Hebrews 11:2 NKJV — For by it (faith) the elders obtained a good testimony.

Faith attributes to God that He is faithful, He is trustworthy, He is loving, He will protect you, and He won't drop you.

Trust is a great compliment to people. It is a great feeling for people to say, “Matthew, please watch my children. I trust you with them.” Or, “Please pick me up at the airport. I trust you won't forget me. And I trust your driving skills.”

God is the most trustworthy. He never fails at His word. God wants our trust. He is very pleased with it. God was so pleased with Abraham

Genesis 15:5 NKJV — Then He brought him outside and said, “Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.” And He said to him, “So shall your descendants be.”

Genesis 15:6 NKJV — And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

And the same is true for us today.

John 3:16 NKJV — “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Faith glorifies God (find verses).

Genesis 22:16-18 NKJV — and said: “By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son— “blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies. “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Hebrews 11 is called the “Hall of faith” chapter. It lists the heroes of faith and the circumstance where they trusted God in spite of the danger they faced. The Bible does not have a “Hall of morality” chapter, or a “Hall of love” chapter, or a “Hall of giving” chapter. Yes, these are good virtues. But God is most honored and glorified with our trust. And so there is a Hall of faith chapter in the Bible.

Or consider the word “full.” We see people in Acts are “full” of the Spirit or “full” of faith. Only Dorcas is said to be “full” of good works.

A lot of ministers skip the first 10 chapters of Hebrews and preach straight on chapter 11. “You should have the faith of these people,” they say. But I believe the first 10 chapters are the foundation that we need in order to reach such a trust in God that they had in chapter 11.

The reason is this: We are sinful creatures. Our hearts have a guilty conscience. If we are ever to have peace in our hearts, we need to know that we have peace with God. We need this assurance in our hearts if we are going to truly expect God to come through for us. Otherwise, you can try to make yourself believe God will come through, but that is more of a work of the flesh, than a soft, trusting heart.

So, in chapters 1 - 10, the author describes what Christ has done to remove our sin. The permanent High Priesthood of Christ, Christ's blood of eternal redemption, and once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. And finally, after discussing all of this, there is a summary

Hebrews 10:19-23 NKJV — Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful.

Christ finished everything my friends. And if we do sin, He is always living to make intercession for us. Will you trust that His sacrifice made you accepted by God? That is *God's only solution* for us to have inner assurance that we are saved, forgiven, and kept by God. After this trust in the sacrifice of Christ, it will be your nature to have the faith of those in Hebrews 11.

Acts 6:3 KJV — Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom ...

Acts 6:5 KJV — ... And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost ...

Acts 6:8 KJV — And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

Acts 7:55 KJV — But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God,

Acts 9:36 KJV — ... This woman was full of good works and almsdeeds which she did.

Acts 11:24 KJV — For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord.

Acts 13:10 KJV — And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil ...

Acts 19:28 KJV — And when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath ...

Add everything from lessons 37.

“Jesus, You can have my everything! My thoughts, time, affections, and all of my heart, soul, mind and strength. But I want Your Voice, I want Your direction, I want the Life of the Holy Spirit coming out of Me. Build me up in You. Be *closer* than my next breath. Be more real than this world. Make me to feel Your embrace, Your love, Your Presence. I need You. I need You at every moment. I want All that You have for me. Show me the cost.”

2 Peter 1:4 NKJV — by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

We have been given exceedingly great and precious promises. Will you *believe* them? There is a difference between knowing and believing. Knowing is in the head, believing is in the heart. If you believe God's promises, there will be an assurance and a peace within you that the promise will come true for *you*.

In my younger days, I would read Romans and I would skip chapters 1-11. "It's just theology. It's doctrine. Tell me what to do!" So I would focus more on chapters 12-16. That is the problem with so many sermons out there.

Ministers don't preach on Job or Ecclesiastes, or anything else that is uncomfortable. And yet they pray and ask God to bless it.

God *insisted* that they keep the Sabbath. Why? He wants His people to know that there is a coming *Rest*, and He doesn't want them to forget it.

Matthew 11:28 NKJV — "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Colossians 2:16-17 NLT — So don't let anyone condemn you for what you eat or drink, or for not celebrating certain holy days or new moon ceremonies or Sabbaths. For these rules are only shadows of the reality yet to come. And Christ himself is that reality.

The role of repentance.

I don't want to give the impression that we never need to make a conscious decision to cut things out of our lives. If there is some open sin in your life, then you need to make a decision to stop doing it.

It is finished. We don't understand the magnitude of those words.

A person who lives by grace:

- Won't be proud like the Pharisee who thought he was better than the tax collector (Luke
- Won't be judgmental when they hear of depraved activities
- Won't strive and stress to keep the law because they are living by faith. And it will be Christ living the Christian life in them
- Won't compare themselves to others because living for Christ is all that matters to them
- Will freely love people because he understands he is freely loved
- Will have the power of God moving through them because they won't take any glory for the miracles, seeing *they* have been crucified and it was *God* that did it.

You could try *teaching* people not to be proud, not to be judgmental, not to stress, etc. But if living by God's grace gets established, then the rest will fall into place.

Paul was a man that tried so, so hard to establish his right standing with God. And then he learned he needed to humbly accept righteousness as a gift that Christ purchased for him. Romans 10:3-4.

(Find a site that has hundreds of sermon topics.) There is a very large problem here: This list suggests to you, that the more sermons you listen to, the more “Christian” you will become. Why, just delve deeper into improving all these areas of your life, and presto! You'll be a great Christian!

But it never works out that way. Almost everyone reading this, if they are honest, will tell you that they have listened to a great many sermons and have seen little change. God *has provided* a way of transformation, but it isn't by you trying to improve yourself.

When you hear preaching, you hear lots of things that go to your head. But if you want to be transformed, your *heart* needs to change. The Holy Spirit and the blood of Christ change your heart. Knowledge doesn't. In fact, knowledge can puff you up.

(Look up heart).

“But when I am watching TV or having fun, I'm not trying to live the Christian life. I'm just trying to enjoy something.”

Yes, but it is still “you” that is living.

Throughout the book, write, *you* don't live the Christian life, Christ does.

Mention Gene Edwards, or at least his story?

This next verse is the attitude that we are supposed to have.

Psalms 44:8 NKJV — In God we boast all day long,

And praise Your name forever. Selah

And even when we do that, sometimes the next passage happens.

Psalms 44:9 NKJV — But You have cast us off and put us to shame,

And You do not go out with our armies.

Yet these tribulations do not mean that we have sinned, nor that God has forsaken us.

Psalms 44:17 NKJV — All this has come upon us;

But we have not forgotten You,

Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant.

This next passage also shows the attitude we are supposed to have.

Psalms 89:15-18 NKJV — Blessed are the people who know the joyful sound!

They walk, O LORD, in the light of Your countenance. In Your name they rejoice all day long,

And in Your righteousness they are exalted. For You are the glory of their strength,

And in Your favor our horn is exalted. For our shield belongs to the LORD,

And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

And even when we do that, sometimes the next passage happens.

Psalms 89:38-39 NKJV — But You have cast off and abhorred,

You have been furious with Your anointed. You have renounced the covenant of Your servant;

You have profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.

Yet these tribulations do not mean that we have sinned, nor that God has forsaken us.

Psalms 89:50 NKJV — Remember, Lord, the reproach of Your servants—

How I bear in my bosom the reproach of all the many peoples,

Above when it says “In God we boast all day long, And praise Your name forever”, we know this is true because Paul says the same here.

Galatians 6:14 NKJV — But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

And as he says also here.

Philippians 3:3 NIV — For it is we who are the circumcision, we who serve God by his Spirit, who boast in Christ Jesus, and who put no confidence in the flesh.

There was one Sunday morning where I wasn't feeling all that good and I was debating whether to go to church. I decided I really needed to connect with the Lord Jesus on a personal and deep level and that no church service could substitute for that. So I stayed home and connected with the Lord and established my relationship with him. That was what I really needed to do. I was refreshed and I don't think that would have happened at church.

*

Sometimes I am flooded with temptation to think stuff I shouldn't be thinking. But all that desire is the old Matthew, and that old Matthew died with Jesus on the Cross. I don't care how strong that desire is. That old man has been cut off. It is no longer a part of who I *truly* am. Jesus loved me, washed me, and gave me a new identity of righteousness. And therefore, knowing that I am greatly loved by the Lord, and knowing that the real me has nothing to do with those desires, I will resist the temptation to give in to them.

A lot of times we are searching for love. And if we don't turn to Him and abide in His love (as we should), we will be very tempted to find love in the wrong places.

I will also say, that it is important to resist temptation and not give in to it. We are called to *love* our Lord. And if you give in to temptation, you are choosing to break His command, which goes *against* loving Him. It will hurt your closeness with Him too. He won't altogether leave you. But you won't have the same intimacy that you would have if you obeyed Him.

Combine the 12 Not's of Jesus in John with the 7 I Am's in John.

It is the same with us. Paul repeatedly said he was a nothing and a no one. But he said through Christ I can do all things.

We look to Jesus, rightfully so, to be our Source for all spiritual life and riches. How is it then, that He made these 12 Not statements? If you read the book of John, Jesus is always attributing His miracles and His ministry to His Father. In fact, the word “father” is in the book of John 105 times. That's a lot! And His Father lived *in Him*. Jesus is God and had God.

John 1:1 NKJV — In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

This is a pattern for us. We are nothing. We have a vital need for a close relationship with the Lord because it is He alone *in us* who will do anything for the Kingdom.

Talk about Jesus' prayer life with the Father. We must have a prayer life too.

Churches don't understand the depravity of the human condition, or how hopeless it is of improving itself, what it means to love God with all the heart, or of the holiness of God, or His way of transforming people.

There is a feeling at the end of a church service like "I can relax now. I've just learned something that will help me in the future."

But this is the opposite attitude of we should have. We ought to be growing in our *dependence* on the Lord, seeing in greater amounts how we need Him.

Consider whether to mention tongues. Paul did not mention them in Romans.

Being dead to the flesh and alive to the Holy Spirit isn't some abstract theological doctrine. It's a lifestyle. This is where the church has it wrong. We teach "*You* need to do this, this, and this. And *You* need to avoid that, that, and that." Friend, dead people don't do things and avoid things. They don't do anything! They're dead! And now so are you. "For you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God."

On the front cover, add "God's redemption plan was never what you can do, but 'Christ *in* you, the hope of glory.'"

Transformation doesn't happen with all these messages on the different virtues of Christianity. It happens by faith. It happens as you look to Jesus, worship Him, and know Him. This should be a huge relief of burden for many of you.

Christianity has a lot of virtues: humility, kindness, chastity, love, forgiveness, patience, joy, generosity, and so forth.

And there are also a lot of (vices) that Christianity avoids. See Galatians 5:19-21.

But look at how Paul says to live right. Vs 16, 18, and 25.

Paul spends three chapters in Romans (chapters 9, 10, 11) to show how the Jews accomplished nothing by being under the law. Not much preaching is done from these three chapters. That tells me the church does not appreciate how useless human effort is. It can't identify sin, its own idolatry, or its powerlessness to change itself. And so we don't see our need for Jesus Himself to live this life in us.

Look at how many times in the new covenant that God says "I will." This is in stark contrast to the old covenant, where everything started with "You shall." The new covenant is everything that God promises that He will do himself. The old covenant is everything that mankind must do themselves. Why would God do this for us? Why would he undertake to do everything for us in the new covenant, leaving nothing for us to do? It's because He loves us! He knows we are not capable of counting ourselves, and so he has promised to do that for us. There's nothing left for us to do, but I believe with all of our heart that Jesus did it all. If we truly believe, then we can't help but worship him for this.

"I need Jesus to do this life in me."

Too often churches have turned that statement into something theological instead of relationship. They will say, "Yes, brother. It's not actually you doing it. It's Jesus." But what God intends for us is more like the following. "Jesus, please be more real to me than my next breath. I long to have a closeness with You where I can hear You, where Your Presence isn't a doctrine, but it's something very real and dear to me. I need You to do this life for me. And that means we will have to have a close relationship!"

John 3. You don't need to just quit the sins that you're doing. And you didn't need a heart change. You need a *spirit* change. This is like the Tabernacle. The outer court is the flesh, the things you outwardly do. The holy place is your heart (maybe your soul). The Holy of Holies is your spirit. We need a change in our very nature, and not just to have good intentions. It is vital to see how powerless you are to do this. This is why Jesus must have our full trust. Place all your faith and all your hope in Him. Look only to Him for transformation of your spirit.

Let me ask you a question. Be honest. How many times throughout the week do you remember something that was preached on Sunday? If I am going to be brutally honest with you, I will tell you that for most weeks the answer is zero.

We each need to know the living Jesus personally. This can't be done by listening to a message. Have you seen His glory? Have you caught a glimpse of His infinite love for you? Have you been refreshed in His Presence? There is no substitute or shortcut for having a close relationship with Him.

The word relationship might not be in the Bible. But fellowship is! And fellowship with Christ is God's first calling on your life.

1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV — God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

People think their calling is to do this or that, or accomplish some great work. God calls you to know, to love, to humble yourself before the great King of Kings. Out of this fellowship, God will use you in the world for His Kingdom.

Acts 4:13 NKJV — Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus.

There it is again. It doesn't say "And they realized that they had listened to hundreds of sermons." No. These people could tell that the apostles had been with the living Jesus Himself. We have to get into His Presence. A tremendous price was paid to remove the thick veil that kept people away from the Presence of God in the temple. Will you honor the Great price that has been paid for you to enter God's Presence? You honor it by entering in and dwelling there. Those around you can tell whether you have been with the Lord or not.

Most ministers will just say "Worship the Lord. Do it now!" And your mind is confused, trying to put one lesson next to another, next to another. "Give more! Study your Bible! Go to church!" And now, "Worship God!" Okay, what's next? I feel like I am doing some Christian dance: "Do this! Do that! Now do this! Now worship! Now do whatever."

But in this book we have laid a foundation. Now we understand what He has done for us. Now we know what to thank him for. The Christian life isn't a dance of different lessons you string together. Remember, "It is finished. He has done it." Christ has done it and finished it! *You* don't need to do anything. Your job is to believe Jesus loves you and gave Himself for you. Everything you do, including your worship, should come from this.

You do not need the flesh. It is corrupt by its nature. All of its efforts aren't going to change it. All your efforts can do is try to keep a law that has already been fulfilled. Christ perfectly kept the commands of the law, and He also took on Himself the curses and punishments of the law. And so now the law is "done away" (2 Corinthians 3).

Your flesh with its sins cannot live the Christian Life. So crucify it. It is finished. You don't need the flesh anymore. Keep your eyes on Jesus and exalt him and abide in him. Forsake the world and every desire of the flesh and every legalistic effort of the flesh. The Christian life is all my faith now. Exalt the one who purchased you ended everything that was required to save you, leaving nothing left for you to do.

A warning.

You cannot live a sinful lifestyle and claim that you are still saved because of your faith in Christ.

Add to book)

Also, in the old covenant, we are commanded "I will be their God and they will be My people." But this is repeated in the new covenant. There is a big difference. In the old covenant, they had to try to make God to be their God. It was a work of human effort, and it failed. Now, in the new covenant, God isn't giving us a command as much as He is stating a fact. He will (finally) be our God.

In the old covenant, "Be holy, for I the Lord your God, am holy." This is in the new covenant too. But again, in the old testament, it was us who would have to try to keep the command. And in the new, it is God who will do it. When Jesus said to someone "Be healed," was He giving them a command that they should go and heal themselves? No. He was stating that He is making it happen. And so here, God will make it happen.

True Christianity is the doctrine in this book. Not "the religion" in this book, but the doctrine. This book shows that no amount of religion or self effort will change you. Jesus said, "You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." The truth, liberating truth, is in this book.

And to this document or to other sermon.

1 John 2:15-17 NKJV — Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

Luke 8:14-15 NKJV — "Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

2 Samuel 23:5 KJV — Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

If you see the tremendous value of the inheritance, of the everlasting covenant, then you see that this world has nothing to offer you.

These two are related.

1 John 4:17 NKJV — Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world.

Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV — Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

I was playing a board game one time, and the question for everyone in the game was, What is the purpose of life?

I wrote down, Glory be to God. Another person wrote, Worship God. I believe these are both correct. But, what you hear often in church today is, God created us because of His love. If you begin to think that way, you will be confused. If God is love, why did He let the world become full of sin and suffering?

If you don't talk about the finished work of Christ, then you are a preacher of works. And the result is, people will feel condemnation, even if you don't preach condemnation to them. Every message will be a reminder of how they don't measure up in some particular area. And if someone doesn't measure up in the sight of God, they are condemned. They must have a foundation in the love and in the Cross of Jesus. If that foundation is laid, other messages will not be taken as condemnation.

Romans 6:11 NKJV — Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We are to “reckon” ourselves dead indeed to sin. Other translations use the word “count, consider, see, think of, regard.” But the point is that the Bible commands you here to believe that you in actuality are dead indeed to sin. This is a very important step to do, because this is the gospel. We preach that in Christ we died. We were circumcised, cut off, buried *with Him* in the grave, and in baptism. We believe that. That is what the Old Testament teaches. So we need to choose to believe that everyday. Look at that word “indeed.” It emphasizes how certain the statement is that follows. Your flesh (with its sins) died indeed with Christ, because the Bible says it died with Christ. Don't look to yourself and at the amount of sin in your life as a gauge to see whether you died with Christ. Your death with Christ is a sure, completed matter, but it is up to you to *believe it to be true*. Call God true and faithful to have redeemed you, sanctified you and completed the work Himself by sending Jesus to die and rise from the dead.

In our preaching against sin, we overemphasize the role of human effort. “Try harder to stop sinning” is the summary of many sermons. Yes, we want sin to be cut out of our lives. But “trying harder” isn’t the biblical way to defeat sin. Any unbeliever can try harder to stop a bad habit. “Trying harder” completely ignores faith and the work of the Cross. The Bible calls us to *believe* that when Christ died on the Cross, you and your sins died with Him. This is good news. And because the death of Christ has made you dead to sin, now you can say *in faith* that the sin in your life is not the real you. Jesus loves you, so much so that He made you dead to sin 2000 years ago on the Cross. If you see sin in your life, You need not panic over it. You should believe that Jesus made you dead to that sin and it is no longer part of your real identity. Preachers largely neglect the role of *faith* when they preach against sin. And the result is that they turn it into a work of man’s effort, and man gets the glory for it, not God.

The Bible says we are:

- Crucified with Christ
- Circumcised by Christ
- Buried with Christ in baptism

These three images illustrate the same thing. We *died* with Christ on the Cross. And our sinful nature died with Him. That was God’s way of defeating sin. Our job is to believe it, thank Him for it, and yield to His power within us.

(Perhaps remove or place elsewhere)

Hebrews 4:9-10 NKJV — There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

What better way to say that one has died than to say that one has “ceased from his works”?

The Sabbath was a day of rest one day a week. Jesus is our Sabbath rest, not for one day a week, but forever. He offers us a rest where one is dead to his flesh, to effort, to bondage, and where everything is by faith.

Perhaps you are wrestling with the doctrine I just presented here, that a Christian should identify himself as being “in Christ”, dying with Him on the Cross. Perhaps you think, “If there is a sin in my life, then no, I have not died with Christ to sin.” If that is how you think, then please read Romans 5:12-19. Christ is compared to Adam. It is certain that humanity was in Adam and was corrupted when he sinned. But, God wrapped humanity in a Person a second time. When Christ died and rose to the Father, humanity died and rose to the Father. Now, we don’t see all of humanity living to the Father. Why?

Romans 5:17 NKJV — For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)

Friends, have *you* accepted the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness? Don’t give me a theological “Yes, Matthew. God credited grace and righteousness to me when I became a Christian.” Technically that is true. But I believe Paul is saying those who *believe*, who *have joyfully accepted in their heart* the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, these people will reign in life through Jesus Christ. Getting back to the question, we don’t see all of

humanity living to the Father because Christ's redemption is only given to those who believe Him.

A declaration to make over sin:

Sin, get OUT of my life. You have no legal right here.

A provision of the New Covenant is that Jesus will be our King.

But this should be taken spiritually, not literally.

John 18:36 NKJV — Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

I don't think the church understands what it means for Jesus to be our King....

I will give a little warning here. God knows our hearts when we sin. He knows if our sin was intentional, or if it was from the weakness of the flesh. If you are *choosing* to act out the sinful desires you feel, then I believe you do need to take it seriously. You should confess it to God, repent from it, and *choose that you will not do it again*. Paul loved the Corinthians very much. And he wrote them 2 Corinthians so that they might repent from open sin before he arrived there. But if they are still openly sinning when he arrives, he warned them that he will not spare (2 Cor 12:2).

I don't like to be this sobering, but intentional sin needs to be dealt with and repented from.

It wasn't the apostles doing great signs and wonders in the book of Acts. They died with Christ and it was no longer them who lived. The Holy Spirit lived in them and did the works through them. They reckoned themselves to be dead with Jesus but also to be made alive toward God when Jesus rose from the dead. He has done it.

This teaching is important because it is the way to humility. Much of the preaching of today has a “You can do it!” mentality. But it is very lacking in humility.

Leviticus starts out describing the sacrifices. And then it gets into relationships with people. That is like Paul's letters. The first half is about the Cross. And the second half is more practical. Leviticus 7:37-38 NKJV — This is the law of the burnt offering, the grain offering, the sin offering, the trespass offering, the consecrations, and the sacrifice of the peace offering, which the LORD commanded Moses on Mount Sinai, on the day when He commanded the children of Israel to offer their offerings to the LORD in the Wilderness of Sinai.

And by the way, I have found that listening to the Bible is more easy and efficient than reading the Bible. Many apps allow you to increase the speech rate so that you can listen to a book in less time. That is a feature I use very often.

The old testament serves a purpose. It was written *for Christians*. I hope to show you the purpose of the old testament in this book.

1 Peter 1:12 NKJV — To them it was revealed that, not to themselves, but to us they were ministering the things which now have been reported to you through those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven—things which angels desire to look into.

Jesus knew His Father, deeply. Personally. Intimately. How else do you get to know the Father but to abide in Him? Sermons and church services are definitely not the same things as you establishing your own personal relationship with Jesus. You need to yourself get alone with God, as Jesus did with His Father. Shut out everything else. Don't let your mind wander. The personal relationship you have with Christ is supposed to be so deep that it will carry you through all of life's troubles.

The lesson in every chapter of John is an "I Am" statement of Jesus. But much preaching today is about good Christians virtues that we should strive to attain. What if Jesus is the true Source of all Christian virtues? What if by abiding in Him, His virtues will be coming out of us? What if this is the true way to transformation?

Go through how Jesus fulfilled all 5 types of sacrifices.

What are we called to? Religion? Keeping the rules of the old testament? No.

1 Corinthians 1:9 NKJV — God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

If you maintain this fellowship, you will keep His commandments, by nature.

Jesus said this in John 15.

Matthew 16.

Peter's confession is the key to revival. It causes Christ to release the keys to the church. We try to do things ourselves, not even realizing that Jesus needs to release to keys.

See election, depravity in John.

(Maybe take out, as it may cause people to only focus on finding the word profound.)

I have the word profound x times in this book. Those statements deserve your consideration.

You can preach a message on about anything, and most people will forget it right away.

Perhaps some will remember it for a week. But it is not common for people to remember messages that were given more than a week ago. This cycle goes on week after week, with little change in people.

What changes people is when they decide to maintain a close relationship with their living Savior, Jesus. If they have their heart set on Him, to love Him, be faithful to Him, and be set apart for Him, they *won't want* to do sinful things.

Jesus taught often about humility. Humility is important for several reasons. List.

The friend of Ricky who prophesied over me said, You are supposed to become dead to your desires.

Yes, that is what Colossians 3 says. Christ circumcises us, but that does not automatically remove all sin from us. We need to put to death our sinful desires by the Spirit. We should so strongly relate to Christ's death and resurrection, we should be so assured that He truly did make us dead to the flesh and alive by the Holy Spirit, that we find sin out of place, inappropriate, and incorrect to be in our lives.

We think lessons and lessons are what we need. But it doesn't work that way. Humans aren't robots. We are spirits. We change when *our spirits* change. And our spirits change when we are united with *the Holy Spirit*. This comes when we abide in Christ.

It is my conviction that the church doesn't need more lessons, messages, and sermons. We *do need* a revelation of the tremendous love of Christ. And we need to know and rest in what was accomplished for us on the Cross. And then we need to each develop *our own* personal relationship with Jesus. And anything that gets in the way of this blessed relationship, we need to cut off, whether it be loving anything in the world, lust, or another sin, or rules, feelings of unworthiness, and shame.

When we get to knowing Him deeply, then we will become like Him. His heart will be put in place of our heart. And then it won't be us doing this life. It will be Him.

Acts 15:10 KJV — Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?
Neither the Jews nor the apostles were able to bear the law.

1 Corinthians 1:30 NKJV — But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and
righteousness and
sanctification and
redemption—

** Add to sermon.

I think it is fair to say that we must reverence God completely and have the utmost respect and honor for him. But on the other hand 1 John 4 says that perfect love drives out all fear. To the point where we may have boldness on the day of judgment. So I don't think God wants us to panic and tremble and stay away from him out of a fear of his wrath and punishment. God wants us to draw near to him and love him all the way. If we have fear, then we will be like the man with the one talent. He feared his master and did little because of his fear. God wants all of our love and reverence. But if we fear Him, we will stay away, we will panic, and we won't trust him to come through for us because we will be afraid that we are his enemy.

It is better to err on the side of showing God too much fear.

Luke 12:4-7 — “And I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. “But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after He has killed, has power to cast into hell; yes, I say to you, fear Him! “Are not five sparrows sold for two copper coins? And not one of them is forgotten before God. “But the very

hairs of your head are all numbered. Do not fear therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.

And also, the man with the one talent had panic fear, which hindered him. But the residents of the town had no fear. And so the master destroyed them.

The law tells you how to perform. Most preaching I hear tells you how to perform. Some churches have a high level of

Oh how God wants every moment of our lives to be lived for *Him*. God tests our love for Him. It is horrible when we fail. People often die when they fail God.

Yet God remains love and He still loves and forgives them.

There is no way that humanity can return to the sinless world before Adam and Eve sinned. No system of government can turn us into righteous people.

Galatians 5 talks about the works of the flesh. Yet Ephesians 6 says

Ephesians 6:12 NKJV — For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

How is it possible? Is there a contradiction here? No. A person's flesh is not evil in itself. The problem is that Adam handed control of it to Satan when he ate the forbidden fruit.

The importance of having a close, personal relationship with Jesus cannot be overstated. It is your *calling* in the new covenant. It is how God *works* through you.

You must guard and develop this relationship.

Humble yourself before Jesus, the great King of Kings. He is exalted far above every name that is named.

So many times we pray, but we fail to honor Him in this way. What does He do when He is not honored? He usually ignores us. He still loves us though, and He won't get angry because He died for our sins so that He would not need to get angry with us. But at the same time, He will not want to dignify our wrong treatment of Him. So we won't see Him move much until He is exalted, honored, and loved with all our hearts.

If anyone love not the Lord Jesus, a curse be on him. As far as I know, the only other time Paul cursed someone was to today who brought legalism to the churches.

You will have to resist all temptations that would hinder your closeness with Jesus. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees many times for being corrupt on the *inside*. God takes very seriously what we think about. You cannot just let your mind wander onto anything it wants to, and expect at the same time to maintain your close relationship with Jesus.

There are many hindrances in our relationship with Jesus.

Lust, not believing He loves you, the business of life, minding high, intellectual things, a love for the things of the world

Romans 5:20 NKJV — Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound (1). But where sin abounded (2), grace abounded (3) much more.

1 and 2 are the word *pleonazo*, which means to superabound or to increase.

3 is the word *hyperperisseuo*. It is from the word *hyper* and *perisseuo*. *Hyper* means over, beyond, more than. *Perisseuo* means to abound, to exceed a fixed number of measure, to superabound. Therefore *hyperperisseuo* means, to much more superabound.

The law entered that sin would abound. That is also what the next verse says.

Romans 6:14 NKJV — For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace.

So if you were under the law, sin would have dominion over you. The entering of the law would make sin to abound, as verse 20 said.

Mankind was without the law for about 2500 years. That is the number of years from Adam to Moses. That is a very long time. If salvation depended on the law, that would be a very long time for mankind to be without the way to salvation.

What is the “end” of the law? Isn’t it the Pharisees? They were very zealous to keep the law. And where did that get them? They went so low that they crucified the Lord. In their great attempt to become holy saints, they became the worst sinners.

The law is all about what “you” can do. All the commandments are “You shall or shall not do this.” And when people focus on what they do or don’t do, they become *proud* of it. Pride was a huge sin of the Pharisees. The law didn’t rid them of pride. It greatly increased it. And in their selfish pride, they didn’t want people turning from them to follow Jesus. So they committed murder.

The Galatians had a desire to be holy, and that is good. But they went about it as so many of us do, which was to put forth more effort to live up to a standard, which for them was the law of Moses.

Look at what happened to the Galatians in their best attempts at being holy.

Galatians 5:15

But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Galatians 5:26

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

The Galatians were envious of one another, which is pride. And in their pride, they were devouring one another.

The way the Galatians should have tried to pursue holiness is by growing in their faith in Jesus. As they greater believe His infinite love for them, as they rely more on His grace, and as they understand more of what Christ accomplished for them, the Holy Spirit will transform them more into His image.

1 Corinthians 15:31

I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

Watchman Née says that Paul means he crucifies the flesh every day.

There is a parallel between Isaiah 53 and 54, and Psalm 22:1-21 and 22:22-31. And they both end saying our righteous standing was accomplished “By the Lord.” “He has done it!”

The fall of mankind

In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the Earth. In six days, God created light, plants, trees, animals, birds, sea creatures, the sun, moon, and stars, and last of all, Adam and Eve. At the end of creation, “God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good.”

Earth was a perfect place. There was no suffering or sin of any kind. Man and animal lived in perfect peace with each other. There was no selfishness, hatred, pride, lying, stealing, or anything that went against love. They were good in body, soul, and spirit. It was in their *nature* for animals and humans to do good and only good. Mankind didn't *know* evil at this stage of history. There was no temptation to commit any of the sins just mentioned because everyone was good through and through. As long as mankind did not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there would be no thought, temptation, or desire to do something evil. We would not know what evil was, or that it existed.

Before Adam and Eve fell, they were good through and through. Question: How did they become so good on the inside?

Was it because they studied lots of books? Did they attend seminary? Did they attend church every week or go to Bible study? Did they have the ten commandments that they strove to obey? No. They didn't do any of these. There was no need for them. In fact, they didn't have to even try *at all* to be good. They were good because God *created* them good, and there was *nothing* in them that ever wanted to do evil.

(take out?)

What is wrong with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? God doesn't want you to *know* good. He wants you to *be* good. And He doesn't want you to *know* evil. He wants you to be ignorant of it. And also, knowledge leads to pride. And pride got Satan kicked out of Heaven (Verse).

Before Adam sinned, it was in their *nature* for animals and humans to do only good. But after Adam sinned, it is in our nature to do evil.

God planted two trees in the garden of Eden: the Tree of Life, and the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. God gave Adam the command

Genesis 2:17 NKJV - "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Sadly, Adam and Eve chose to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and this world has been full of sin and suffering ever since.

God told Adam "in the day" that you eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you will surely die. We know Adam and Eve didn't *physically* die that day, so they must have died some other way. It must have been their spirits that died. After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, they became *spiritually* dead.

Right after they ate the fruit,

Genesis 3:7 NKJV - Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they [were] naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves coverings.

Do you see how they are now self-aware and defensive? They are now thinking and watching out *for themselves*. They didn't use to do that. But now, they can't help it. Their *nature* has changed. They were created with a good nature, but now they have a sinful nature.

God is entirely holy, and He cannot dwell with those who are sinful. Adam and Eve did not know that by eating the fruit, they would make themselves unworthy of being in the Presence of God. The serpent lied to them saying "You will be like God, knowing good and evil." He likes to mix truth with lies, and in a sense Adam and Eve did become like God, knowing good and evil (vs 22), but the serpent was lying when he made it sound like a desirable thing to know good and evil. Now that mankind knows good and evil, they are unworthy to be in the Presence of God. So God drove them out of Eden.

Adam and Eve soon realized that their sin didn't just affect them. It also affected all of the animals. Before the fall God had said

Genesis 1:30 NKJV - "Also, to every beast of the earth, to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, in which [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for food"; and it was so.

So the animals did not kill each other in the time before Adam and Eve ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The evil thought of killing another animal for food did not enter their mind.

One day, under the reign of Christ, the animals will return to the good state they were created in. Isaiah 11 describes this future time. Here is a small portion of that.

Isaiah 11:7-9 NKJV — The cow and the bear shall graze;

Their young ones shall lie down together;

And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play by the cobra's hole,

And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper's den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain,

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD

As the waters cover the sea.

It is such a beautiful picture of peace, and a far cry from the world as it is today. We would all count it a miracle if the animals stopped harming each other. Yes, animals can be *taught* to not harm each other. But it is still their *nature* to do so. Do we realize that humans are in the same sad predicament as the animals?

Isaiah 1:9 NKJV — Unless the LORD of hosts Had left to us a very small remnant, We would have become like Sodom, We would have been made like Gomorrah.

(Maybe remove).

Isaiah tells of a new Heaven and a new Earth. Look at the nature of the animals that aren't corrupted by sin.

Isaiah 65:25 KJV — The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, and the lion shall eat straw like the bullock: and dust shall be the serpent's meat. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain, saith the LORD.

It is impossible for mankind to put the world back to this perfect place where the animals have no desire to harm. But it is not impossible for God to put the world back to that place.

The plants were also affected by Adam's sin.

Genesis 3:17-18 NKJV — Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it':

"Cursed is the ground for your sake;

In toil you shall eat of it

All the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you,

And you shall eat the herb of the field."

The first two sons of Adam and Eve were Cain and Abel. Abel was a righteous man. Did God allow Abel to walk into the garden of Eden and eat from the Tree of Life? No. Even in his righteousness, Abel still had a sinful nature like all of us. He isn't worthy to be in the presence of the Most Holy God. Not a single descendent of Adam and Eve is sinless through and through. And so none of them have been allowed to eat from the Tree of Life. Interestingly, the Tree of Life is mentioned again, all the way in the last chapter of the Bible. It is in Heaven, the New Jerusalem. But by the time we get there we will have put off this body with its sinful nature. The blood of Jesus will have powerfully cleansed us from all sin, and we will be worthy to eat from it.

One day Cain and Abel both brought an offering to the Lord. The Lord accepted Abel's offering, but not Cain's. Cain was jealous that God only accepted Abel's offering. Sadly, Cain murdered Abel. Would this tragedy have happened if Adam and Eve never ate from the Tree of the knowledge of good and evil? No. I don't think jealousy or murder would have ever entered Cain's mind. They would have never tempted him. He would have never thought of them. He would have never *known* evil thoughts, like jealousy and murder. Thankfully it's rare for someone to murder. But, feelings of anger and jealousy have afflicted all of us, as they did Cain.

What I am trying to say is that *we are used to having a sinful nature*, and we don't consider that these feelings and many others come from the fallen nature that we inherit from Adam. It is difficult for us to grasp what it is like to never have an evil thought or desire. But this is how it was in Eden, and how it is in Heaven.

We are so used to living in a sinful world, that I don't think we understand how deep rooted our sinful nature goes.

Jeremiah 17:9 KJV — The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Proverbs 20:9 KJV — Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?

Ecclesiastes 7:20 KJV — For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.

1 Corinthians 15:50 NKJV — Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.

Colossians 1:21 NKJV — And you (all), who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works ...

Colossians 2:13 NKJV — And you (all), being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh ...

Ephesians 2:1-3 NKJV — And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

And the big one

Romans 3:10-18 NKJV - As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one." "Their throat [is] an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps [is] under their lips"; "Whose mouth [is] full of cursing and bitterness." "Their feet [are] swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery [are] in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known." "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

If we are going to rightly divide the word of God, it is important to understand the fallen nature that every one of us has through Adam. A lot of people are under the impression that they need Jesus because He died to pay for the sinful things they have done. And yes, Jesus did die to pay the penalty for our sinful deeds. But if you think that is all you need Jesus to do for you, then you don't understand how deeply corrupt the human condition is. We haven't just done wrong things. We are corrupt creatures to the very core of our soul. Our nature is to sin. And on top of that, we are powerless in ourselves to change that corruption. It's important to see that you will see how very dire our need for a Savior is. If we could see everything in our hearts and thoughts that is sin, we would be shocked. We have no clue how desperately wicked we are, and how incredibly holy God is. And so we don't know the desperate situation / serious predicament that mankind finds itself in.

After spending the first three chapters on the book of Romans to show that the whole world lies guilty before God, Paul writes this:

Romans 3:19 NIV — Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. And if I may say, herein is a major problem in modern Christianity. Preachers don't want to insult anyone, nor to make people feel uncomfortable. And so the church has Not been brought to see the seriousness and the gravity of their sins. The moment has not hit us yet where we become silenced by seeing how very guilty we are before a holy God. And if we don't see this, we won't be filled with gratitude for the Cross because we don't see the great amount of punishment we deserve, which Christ entirely took for us. And we also won't see how that "Jesus in us" is our only hope to live righteously. This will be our focus later on.

Romans 3.

It is based off a psalm. Add that Psalm.

So, it is important for us to realize the magnitude of our fallen nature. For only then can we be most appreciative of what God has done to redeem us from it. And only then will we see how truly desperate, needful we are for forgiveness and redemption. It will become the best news of our lives, if we see our utter need for it.

(take out).

Add doctrine of depravity from Crucified with Christ document.

After Adam and Eve fell, mankind was in need of salvation. We need both to be forgiven of our sins and also to be rid of the sinful nature we now have. God foresaw this. And He had a plan that He carried out 4000 years later to meet both of these needs.

Genesis 3:15 NKJV - And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."

Genesis 3:21 NKJV - Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them.

As Christians we believe the Seed is referring to Jesus, and the tunics of skin also refers to Jesus. Note how God did NOT give mankind any set of laws or any programs to help us with our behavior. If mankind could be saved by keeping a set of laws, I am sure God would have given it to them right there in the garden. Laws and behavior changes will not save anyone, but the Seed that God prophesied of *will* save all who trust in Him.

Mankind is trying to find their way back to God. It is a built-in desire. You may not *know* that is who you are searching for, but something in you won't be content until you are connected to your Maker.

Acts 17:26 RSV — And he made from one every nation of men to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitation,

And why did God do all of the work in the verse above? It must be very important because it is a very big matter that God made all the nations. We see the reason in the very next verse.

Acts 17:27-28 RSV — that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel after him and find him. Yet he is not far from each one of us, for 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your poets have said, 'For we are indeed his offspring.'

Oh how God wants us to find Him. It doesn't say, "that they might listen to sermons and be religious. Jesus said

John 17:3 NKJV — "And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

To find God and know Him is the true need of humanity. Whether we know it or not, all of us are really trying to find our way back to God. It's just that we settle so easily for something else. To find God and know God is the way to have true life in you. And the good news is, it is God's desire that we should find Him.

Look at David's desire to know God.

Psalm 63:1-3 KJV — A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary. Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Doctrine of election/depravity in the book of John. Jesus repeatedly said it requires God to come to Him.

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Selfishness is sin. Failing to love God with all your heart is sin, and a great one because it breaks the greatest commandment. Loving something in addition to God is sin. Coveting is sin. Pride is sin. Not giving God all the glory is sin. Not being thankful is sin. Not loving your neighbor is sin. If you stare at someone for their looks, it is favoritism, and that is sin. Fear is sin. Unforgiveness is sin. Unbelief is sin. Laziness is sin. Anger is sin. Jealousy is sin. And there are so many other sins too. If you do even a moment of sin, you incur the everlasting wrath of a Holy God.

Oh that we could for a moment see everything in our hearts that is sin. We would quickly despair of ourselves. We would say, "I didn't realize all these things were sin. I am so used to them that I thought they were normal." And you would also say, "I never knew I was this corrupt. There is no way I can rid all of this sin out of me. It has become very deep rooted, and it is far too much for me to stop it all. I have no hope at making myself holy enough for Almighty God to accept me." That is exactly the point dear reader. The place the Bible is trying to make you understand all of humanity is in a great predicament. We have all sinned. But worse than that, on our own we are not even able to stop our sinning.

Churches are afraid to expose how short of holiness we fall and how helpless we are to change our sinful nature. But If you are able to see this, then it will help you look to Christ (not yourself) to be your righteousness before God and your strength to live the Christian life.

Proverbs 13:10 KJV — Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.

Arguments come about only by pride. How many of us ever have arguments? All I am trying to do is to point out that something about the human condition isn't right.

Proverbs 15:8 NKJV — The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, ...

Proverbs 21:4 NKJV — A haughty look, a proud heart, And the plowing of the wicked are sin.

The sacrifice and plowing of the wicked are sin? How can that be? God sees the heart. If a man does something, even a good thing, but has evil in his heart, his deed will not be accepted by God. It will be regarded as sin. The sad state of mankind after the fall is that we cannot bring our own righteousness to God. We may think we did great things. But we will not be able to say that our *inward* man was entirely right with God, that it was entirely loving Him, and that there was never a hint of sin inside us.

A preacher once said, "I don't trust the five holiest minutes of my life to be able to stand before God." I agree. God is entirely holy, and to say that we have reached a place where there is *no spec* of any sin in us, is too far.

You are no better than anyone else. That is the problem with religion. It makes you think you are better than others. But we really all have the same fallen nature.

Romans 2:1 NKJV — Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. It makes it difficult to love people if you think you are better than them.

Luke 18:11-12 NKJV — "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.'

In his boasting, this man cites virtues that he is for and against. There are messages preached in churches every week about the virtues he mentions. The result is that so many Christians are trying to live for God in the same way that this Pharisee is trying to live for God:

It was all *him* doing it.

As we will see later, God intends for it to be *all Christ* doing it.

Look at the apostle Paul. Before Paul got saved, he could honestly say along the the Pharisee, "I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And now *after* Paul meets Jesus, he can still honestly make the same statement. What is the difference? The difference is that it is now *Christ in him* doing the works. Paul is Not trying to "behave himself" as this Pharisee is doing.

(Maybe take out.)

Adam and Eve were supposed to have dominion over the animals and to rule over them. But since Adam didn't submit to God's authority, now the animals will not submit to man's authority.

Heaven is a totally holy place. There is zero selfishness, zero lust, zero pride, zero bitterness, and zero of asking that is wrong or that harms. Before the fall, Earth was also without these things.

Genesis 1:31 NKJV — Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, mankind has been trying to get back to paradise, back to God. God knows all things. He is the purpose of all things. He can do all things. He created all things, and everything He created was good.

It is so easy for us to stray away in our thoughts to something that is sin.

Do you think after the fall, that Adam and Eve, even with their best efforts, could ever get back to a place where their nature is completely good?

Someone may ask, “If I can't conquer my sins, why does God ask me to repent from them?”

I say, “You *can* change your mind about your sins. You can agree that it is wrong and you want to stop. And you *can* in many cases choose to stop doing the outward behavior of the sin. And you can choose to start trying to quit the inward sin too.”

Repentance was commanded in the old testament and by John the Baptist who preached before Jesus died and rose to make people born again. You need to repent of your sin, and you can't just blame God for not taking away that desire.

Take out? Put near Nicodemus?

When you hear stories of people committing evil deeds, you are no better. Perhaps you have learned to behave and control yourself, but that same nature is in you too.

(Move elsewhere?)

Now that all of us have a nature that tends toward sin, will God be patient with us? Will He have mercy for our myriad faults? Yes

Psalms 103:10 NKJV — He has not dealt with us according to our sins,
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.

Why is He so kind? Because He says a few verses later,

Psalms 103:14 NKJV — For He knows our frame;
He remembers that we are dust.

Someone may say, “I'm a good person, and I'm not a Christian.”

Let me say a few things about that.

1. Sin is often spoken of in the Bible as a condition of the heart, not just a wrong action. Can you say that you have never coveted anyone's possessions, money, looks, talents, or anything that belongs to them? Have you loved your neighbor as yourself? Have you ever had inappropriate thoughts in your head? What about bitterness, anger, or unforgiveness? All of these things are sins according to the Bible, even if they are only inward. Jesus never did any of them, and Heaven will be a place where these things are never done. That will exclude all of us from getting in, unless we can find someone who will pay our debt and wash us clean.

2. To break one of them is to break them all. James 2:10-11 — For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. For He who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” Now if you do not commit adultery, but you do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. God is so infinitely holy that even one sin will merit eternal wrath. But He is also full of love, and in His love, He sent Jesus to bear all of our wrath on the Cross. God gives us to the end of our lives to believe His Son Jesus and accept Him as our Lord.

Mankind tries to live the Christian life

The Bible gives a history of His dealings with mankind after the Fall. Here I break down history into four “ages” where God deals with His people in different dispensations. The “ages” are: the age of conscience, the age of the law, the age of Judges, and the age of kings. We will see whether any of these had success at stopping our sinful nature.

The age of conscience.

After Adam and Eve sinned, mankind had only their conscience to live by for the next 1600 years, till the flood came. They did not have the law of God, or the Scriptures. So their revelation of God was limited. There were *some* righteous people in this time. But by the time it reached Noah's day, this age ended in failure.

Genesis 6:5 KJV — And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Only Noah's family was found righteous. God flooded and destroyed the world because it had become corrupt. Living by one's conscience did not rid the sin from our lives.

The age of the law.

After the flood, life went on for a few centuries. And then God found Abraham, who became the father of Isaac, who became the father of Jacob, who became the father of twelve sons. A famine struck the land, and Jacob and his sons all moved to Egypt to find food. Then, over 400 years, they multiplied greatly. God led them out of Egypt by Moses, and in the wilderness, God gave Moses the law and the design of the Tabernacle.

The Tabernacle was a large tent that made a way for people to approach God. It was divided in three sections: the outer court (open to all Israelites), the Holy Place (open only to the Priests), and the Holy of Holies, where God dwells (open only to the High Priest). The people would offer their sacrifices in the outer court, the priests would carry out ministry duties in the Holy Place, and once a year the High Priest would bring the blood of a calf into the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of all the Israelites committed in the past year.

The deepest part of The Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies. It was a room with only one object in it, the Ark of the Covenant. On top of the Ark was a cover called the mercy seat. Let us look at three details in the Tabernacle that relate to approaching God.

1. Two cherubims were placed on the mercy seat. They guarded the Presence of God, who dwelled between them.
2. The gate of the Tabernacle was placed on the East side.
3. There was a thick veil that guarded the entrance into the Holy of Holies. If anyone, apart from the High Priest, dares to enter this room, they will die.

Now let us briefly look at three details about Eden after God drove Adam and Eve from there.

1. Cherubims guarded the way to God.
2. They were placed on the East side of Eden.
3. They had flaming swords that turned in every direction. If anyone dares to enter paradise, where God is, they will die.

Do those three qualities of Eden sound similar to the Tabernacle? Yes. They are the same. Mankind was driven away from the Presence of God when they sinned in Eden. And now God has given them the Tabernacle to recreate the conditions of the garden of Eden so that man can find their way back to God.

Whether they realize it or not, mankind has been trying to find their way back to God. And now, with the Tabernacle erected, they finally have a way back to Him. God dwells between the cherubims in the Holy of Holies. If anyone wants to meet with God, they must go to the Tabernacle, go through the outer court, go into the Holy Place, and go through the veil, into the Holy of Holies. Then, they will be in the very Presence of the Lord God.

But there is a large problem. No one is allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, where the Presence of God is. Only the high priest can enter, and only once a year, and only if he brings blood. The Tabernacle looked so promising. Finally, we have a way to get back to God. But, *you* can't get in there. Nobody but the high priest can. If you are desperate to truly be with God, in His Presence, you will have to wait for something besides the Tabernacle. The Holy Spirit was showing the people that the true way to the Presence of God, where everyone longs to return, is not going to happen at this time and through this Tabernacle.

Hebrews 9:7-8 NKJV — But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance; the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing.

I say all of this to show you the sobering fact that none of us is worthy to enter the Holy of Holies, where God is. We all inherited a sinful nature from Adam and we cannot rid ourselves from it. The Bible says that in Adam we were "made sinners" (Rom 5:19). We were "dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1). Not the best behavior from any person could ever take away their sinful condition. And so, no one but the high priest could enter God's Presence.

In the days of the Tabernacle, sacrifices and the shedding of blood were happening all the time, every day. No matter how many their sins are, God wants them to have assurance that He is merciful and forgiving. And then they can take bold steps of obedience for Him.

Take out.

Possibly add two pictures on top of each other. The top, of 2 cherubims on the East side of Eden, the other, of the tabernacle with the gate on the East side, and the two cherubims guarding the Presence of God.

When I say “the law”, I am referring to everything God gave to Moses on the mountain. The law includes the ten commandments, other rules for society, the design of the Tabernacle, and rules for priests and sacrifices. Christians aren't expected to perform any rules regarding the Tabernacle, priests, or sacrifices. But we still should be keeping the ten commandments and the rules for society. Christians and Jews have in common that we believe in the same commandments.

Eight of the ten commandments begin with “You shall not.” The other two commandments (Honor your father and mother, and Remember the Sabbath) don't begin with “you,” but it is still implied that “you” are the one to keep the commandment. So for all ten commandments, the do-er of the commandment is “you.” The Israelites did not have the Holy Spirit at this time. It would be entirely up to them - and them alone - to keep them. They would have to rely on themselves, dead in trespasses and sins, to keep God's holy and perfect law.

(Maybe take out).

In a later chapter we will look at the new covenant and we will discover that *God* will be the active one. *He* will write His commands in us and *He* will cause us to do them. But at this point in history, the Israelites were alone in their attempts to keep the law.

I titled this chapter, “Mankind Tries to Live the Christian Life” because that is what is happening in this time in history when God's people lived under the law. I have said many times how mankind is spiritually dead because of Adam and Eve's sin. Yet, God still expected His people, the Jews, to keep the law and live a holy life, though they were not born again.

Later on there is a chapter called “Christ Lives the Christian Life in Us.” In it I describe how God expects Christians, like the Jews, to keep the law and be holy. But it is a very different thing for Christians to keep the law than for Jews to keep the law. It will be *Christ in them*, and not themselves, who keeps the law. More will be said about this throughout the book.

God gave them the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. It was a very frightful scene. The mountain was smoking, the trumpet sounded, thunder was roaring, God spoke audibly, and if any person or animal touched the mountain, it must die.

Hebrews 12:21 NKJV — And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)

Surely at this point, the Israelites had a great fear of Almighty God. Was such fear enough to keep them from breaking the law they just heard from God with their own ears?

When the law was ratified, Moses shed the blood of animals and sprinkled the blood on the altar. Now look at what happens next.

Exodus 24:7-8 KJV — And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

In the old covenant, *the people* (not God) take it on themselves to do and obey the commands of the law. Maybe they thought they were able to. A lot of people today assume that by their own willpower they are able to obey all of the law. For a time, willpower can give you the strength to make some changes in your life. But willpower does not change the condition of the heart. The Israelites are still spiritually “dead in trespasses and sins.” They haven’t had the difficult revelation that *they aren’t able* to keep all of God’s holy law. Their willpower may suffice them for a time to keep the law. But if their *spirits* aren’t made alive, they will inevitably go back to their old behavior. In the case of the Israelites, they quickly reverted back as we shall see soon.

After God gave the ten commandments, Moses spent 40 days on the mountain with God. But then the following happened.

Exodus 32:7-8 NKJV — And the LORD said to Moses, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. “They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!’ ”

Their fear and willpower to keep the law made them last only 40 days without an idol. And then they gave in again to their fallen nature and made a golden calf.

The Israelites had said earlier, “All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.” They may have *thought* they were able to come through on their word. But they weren’t.

Moses destroyed the golden calf, and the Israelites wandered the wilderness for 40 years. But even during this time, they kept their idols.

Amos 5:25-26 NKJV — “Did you offer Me sacrifices and offerings
In the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel? You also carried Sikkuth your king
And Chiun, your idols,
The star of your gods,
Which you made for yourselves.

The law, as holy as it was, did not work to transform them.
Add verses about its holiness.

Maybe take out.

The age of the law continued all the way until Jesus died and put us in a new covenant.

Add here or somewhere, the law was given to condemn everyone, *so that no flesh may boast*. God hates pride and boasting.

The age of Judges.

Let's move ahead. Moses dies. Then Joshua brings them into the Promised land. And then Joshua dies. The Israelites were supposed to continue driving out the nations that lived in the Promised Land, but they didn't. They disobeyed God, and an angel said to them, Judges 2:3 NKJV — "Therefore I also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; but they shall be thorns in your side, and their gods shall be a snare to you.'"

It is sad how one sin can lead to many more. And that is what happened here.

A pattern began where over and over again, God's people turned to idols, under the influence of the nations that they were supposed to drive out. God is a jealous God, and He does not want to share our worship with idols. Their idolatry provokes the wrath of God. And then God hands them over to the enemy nations. And then they cry out to God in their affliction, and God raises up a judge to deliver them out from the enemy. But sadly, they always go right back to their sins after they are delivered. And then God hands them over to other nations. Then, in their affliction, they need another judge to deliver them, and then another and another. The next verse passage shows the pattern that happened time and time again.

Judges 2:17-19 NKJV — Yet they would not listen to their judges, but they played the harlot with other gods, and bowed down to them. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the LORD; they did not do so. And when the LORD raised up judges for them, the LORD was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge; for the LORD was moved to pity by their groaning because of those who oppressed them and harassed them. And it came to pass, when the judge was dead, that they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers, by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way.

None of the judges was able to make them "cease from their own doings nor from their stubborn way." This pattern repeats itself about 8? times in the book of Judges.

Maybe take out.

Deuteronomy 12:8 KJV — Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.

Twice in the book of Judges, we read the following verse.

Judges 17:6, 21:25 NKJV — In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.

What did it get them, when “Everyone did what was right in his own eyes”? It got them living by their sinful nature. They had the law and the ten commandments in this time. But they were definitely not keeping them. God had to raise up judges again and again to deliver His people from other nations. The time of the judges did not stop their sinful nature.

The age of kings.

The last judge was Samuel. You might think that with the failure of the judges to change to stop the idolatry of the Israelites, the solution might be to have a king over them. Perhaps a kingdom will be a form of government that will solve their problems. So they brought the issue to Samuel. Here is how he reacted.

1 Samuel 8:6-7 NASB20 — But the matter was displeasing in the sight of Samuel when they said, “Give us a king to judge us.” And Samuel prayed to the LORD. And the LORD said to Samuel, “Listen to the voice of the people regarding all that they say to you, because they have not rejected you, but they have rejected Me from being King over them.

God actually did Not want them to have a king, even though without a king they kept going back to their sinful ways. God has been wanting the whole time for His people to make *Him* as their king in their hearts. If God truly occupied that place in their heart, they would not give themselves to idolatry. But now they have rejected that, and God gave Israel kings for the next 200 years.

Their first king was Saul. But he disobeyed God twice and became evil, and God made David the next king. David was righteous. And then his son Solomon became king. Solomon started out righteous, but he made idols for his many wives. As punishment, God tore the kingdom of Israel away from Solomon's son Rehoboam. Now God's people were split into two nations. The northern eleven tribes became the nation of Israel, and the southern-most tribe became the nation of Judah.

It's very sad, but if you read 1 Kings and 2 Kings, the nation of Israel was evil the whole time. All of their 19 kings (except maybe Jehu) were evil. So God destroyed Israel at the hands of Assyria.

2 Kings 17:5-23 summarizes what happened to the nation of Israel. It is too much to copy it all here. But here are a few verses.

2 Kings 17:11 NKJV — There they burned incense on all the high places, like the nations whom the LORD had carried away before them; and they did wicked things to provoke the LORD to anger,

2 Kings 17:15 NKJV — And they rejected His statutes and His covenant that He had made with their fathers, and His testimonies which He had testified against them; they followed idols, became idolaters, and went after the nations who were all around them, concerning whom the LORD had charged them that they should not do like them.

2 Kings 17:18 NKJV — Therefore the LORD was very angry with Israel, and removed them from His sight; there was none left but the tribe of Judah alone.

2 Kings 17:22-23 NKJV — For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they did not depart from them, until the LORD removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said by all His servants the prophets. So Israel was carried away from their own land to Assyria, as it is to this day.

The nation of Judah lasted about a century longer than Israel did. Of the kings of Judah, about half were righteous, and half were wicked. But eventually they became so corrupt that God had to destroy them also. God used Nebuchadnezzar to destroy Judah and to take many people away as exiles into Babylon.

So, neither Israel with its kings ever found a way to rid sin out of them, nor did Judah with its kings ever manage to rid sin out of them.

Maybe take out.

All kings are humans, and they also have a sinful nature. It is no wonder that they also could not rid sin out of their nation.

The people of Moses' day took an oath to keep the law. They said "All that the LORD hath said we will do, and be obedient." But they were not able to do it. And so they were defeated. In summary, the time of the kings was a failure for both Israel and Judah.

But, instead of God making a permanent end of Judah (as He did with Israel), He sends them into exile for 70 years.

Maybe move.

So far, all of these ages have been a failure, God has reserved something better for believers in the New Testament. It will be an age, not of the law, but of grace.

Ephesians 3:2-5

if indeed you have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God ...which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to His holy apostles and prophets:

It ends in Exile

Nearly all the old testament books bear witness that God's people will forsake the Lord, commit many sins, and that God will send them into exile. But they also bear witness that God will have

mercy on His people, restore them to their land, and God will send His Spirit upon them to cause them to keep His commands.

It is prophesied dozens of times that God's people will go into exile for their sins. It is a very major theme of the old testament. Friends, if such an event is So important that it is talked about throughout the whole old testament, don't you think we should find out Why? Don't you think this is something ministers should preach about?

Here is a partial list of prophecies that God's people will be taken as captives because they forsook the Lord.

Deut 4

Deut 29:26-28

Deut 30:1-10

Deut 31:16-18

Deut 31:20-21

Deut 31:29

Deut 32:15-43

Isaiah

Jeremiah 29:10

Ezekiel (20)

Amos 5:25-27

Habakkuk 1

Nehemiah 1:8-9

Micah 4:10

The book of Habakkuk is mostly a prophecy that God is going to raise up Babylon to take away His people into exile.

The whole book of Lamentations, all 5 chapters, are Jeremiah lamenting the destruction of Judah by Babylon during their exile.

Ezra and Nehemiah were written by two people who had been exiled in Babylon, but who returned from exile back to Judah to lead the people there.

The book of Esther was written while God's people were in exile. Esther and Mordecai delivered the Jews in exile from being destroyed by the evil Haman.

The books of Haggai and Zechariah were written to encourage those who returned from exile to build the temple and to live for God.

The book of Daniel tells how God used the obedience of Daniel, an exile in Babylon. Daniel influenced Nebuchadnezzar and the next three kings for God.

In short, if there was no exile of the Israelites, then the following books would not even exist: Lamentations, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Daniel, Haggai, and Zechariah. These were all written, either when the people were in captivity, or when they were rebuilding their nation because it was destroyed during the captivity. Do you see how *major* the exile is in the old testament? That's what even the best, most holy religious system gets you: failure. Human nature is so corrupt that even God's holy law was not able to transform us. I hear so very little preaching about this today, when it is such a big part of the Bible. If you think you can improve yourself, you will not see your need to humbly depend on Christ moment by moment.

They had the law for about 1400 years. That is how much time passed from Moses giving the law, and Jesus dying on the Cross. And how did the age of the law end?

In exile. It was a disaster. They could not keep the law, no matter what system of government they had.

Even the best religious system the world has ever seen, God's holy law, did nothing to change the heart. They had the two great commandments in the law. They had the ten commandments. They had other commandments that were right and holy. God gave humanity 1400 years of the law to show us that it doesn't work.

Hebrews 9:17-18 KJV — For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

In Exodus 24, Moses killed the animals, took the blood, read the law, and they replied "All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient." Then Moses sprinkled the people with the blood and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words." That was how the old testament was put into effect. It was one big promise by the people that they will do all of its commands.

Put a break down of those 1400 years.

Maybe take out.

(Did you know the old testament in the Bible was named after the old testament, which was the law of Moses? The first $\frac{3}{4}$ of the Bible was God dealing with His people under the holy law of Moses. But it was a failure.)

But for the sake of humanity, that every human being might see their utter need for Jesus, God shows the world that even the best religion didn't remove the sinful nature we have.

Here is a profound verse.

Romans 5:20 NKJV — Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

Romans 7:5 NKJV — For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law ...

Galatians 3:19 AMP — Why, then, the Law [what was its purpose]? It was added [after the promise to Abraham, to reveal to people their guilt] because of transgressions [that is, to make people conscious of the sinfulness of sin], and [the Law] was ordained through angels and

delivered to Israel by the hand of a mediator [Moses, the mediator between God and Israel, to be in effect] until the Seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Maybe take out.

When it says “because of transgressions” in the previous verse, the word “because of” is the Greek word charin. Charin is from the word charis, which means grace or favor. Charin seems to mean, “To support the cause of, to promote the increase of the thing mentioned.” It is only in the new testament a mere 7 times, even though the phrase “because of” is in the new testament 86 times. Paul very well might be saying, “the law was added for the increase of transgressions.” Show examples.

I need a Greek expert here.

Why would God want to give us a law if it caused our sins to abound? Does God somehow take pleasure in sin? No. God takes no pleasure in sin. God was willing to let our sins abound *so that we would be brought to an awareness of our sinful nature*,

Romans 3:20 NKJV — Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

The sinful nature is so strong that when it encounters God’s holy law, it only gets worse! This is Paul’s own experience in Romans 7.

Churches usually don’t talk about the doctrine being presented here. And that is a shame because God does have a way to defeat the sinful nature, but you have to come to the end of yourself first.

The curses of the law, including exile into other nations, are recorded in Deut 28:15-68 and in Leviticus 26:14-46. When Daniel is himself in exile, he acknowledges that the curses of the law, including exile, have happened. And he says they happened as Moses said they would happen. Daniel 9:10-14.

I for one didn’t even know that this was the story of the old testament until I read the Bible in tenth grade. I grew up in church, but in all my services and church activities, I was never taught what happened in the old testament. Maybe the preachers thought it was too advanced. Maybe they thought people weren’t interested. In any case, they did me a great disservice because they kept me ignorant of the history and meaning of the old testament.

I have noted many times so far, that ever since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, nothing has been able to rid sin out of us. Neither the holy law of Moses, or any of the Judges, or any of the kings has been able to stop our sinful nature.

Next, I want us to look at God’s remedy of our sin problem, which He prophesies of again and again through the old testament.

I don’t want to make it sound like the only lesson in the old testament is that rules don’t change us. The old testament has stories of people that trusted and obeyed God when it was very difficult. It shows God’s faithfulness to provide when we obey God that way. The old testament

shows how God punishes sin and disobedience, yet has mercy on those who repent. It shows God's dealings with kings and nations and how He blesses those who serve Him, even if they go through much affliction first.

No form of government was able to deal with the sin nature that all of us have. Whether it was Moses and the law in the wilderness, or the time of judges for 400 years, or living in a monarchy under a succession of Kings, *nothing* was able to make the people stop sinning. And today, some people think the solution is to have a certain form of government. And I believe some forms of government are better than others. But really, even the best form of government will do nothing to change the deep rooted nature we have to sin.

God promises a New Covenant

In addition to the exile being prophesied repeatedly, God's solution is also foretold on a repeated basis. The old covenant was the law of Moses. The whole thing was a set of commands that the people must do, and what they must not do. If ever there was a holy law given, this was it.

The law was holy. The Israelites had the best religion the world has ever seen.

Deuteronomy 4:8 NKJV — “And what great nation is there that has such statutes and righteous judgments as are in all this law which I set before you this day?

Nearly all the books of the old testament prophesied that there would be an exile of God's people for their sins and God will restore His people and give them a new heart. I'm serious. It's repeated all over throughout the old testament. This is not talked about anywhere near enough. And God also says repeatedly, that after His people return from exile, this time He won't give us a religion. God Himself will change our heart. Our job will be to believe on His Son, and to know Him deeply.

The next three passages *ought* to be very famous. They describe the New Covenant, which is God's solution for our sinful heart. How many of you know what the New Covenant is?

The best passage I know of to describe the New Covenant is Jeremiah 31:31-34. Jeremiah 31:31-34 KJV — Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the LORD: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the

greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Let's look at a few points about the New Covenant.

1. It is NOT like the covenant God made with Moses. The ten commandments were written on stones for us to live up to by our best attempts.
2. Israel and Judah Broke God's laws given to Moses. Humanity inherited a sinful nature from Adam and was unable to keep God's holy law. That is why Israel and Judah were defeated and went into captivity.
3. God will put His commands deep within us and write them on our heart. This happens by the Holy Spirit coming to live inside of us. With Him dwelling in our hearts, He will take out the sinful nature and will give us holy desires instead.
4. God will be our God and we will (finally) be His people. If we take hold of it, God has made a way in the new covenant where our hearts will no longer keep going to idols as they did in the old covenant.
5. We can all now know the Lord in a very deep way. Jesus will come to dwell in our hearts. He will shed His love in us and we will love Him back. There is a living relationship here.
6. The reason all these blessings are opening up to us is "for (meaning because) I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Christ's death on the Cross paid for the sins of the world once for all, making us worthy to have a relationship with God.

That final point is very important. Five times the book of Hebrews says Jesus offered Himself "once" for our sins. In the old covenant, you had to repeatedly offer up an animal after every time you sinned so that you would be forgiven. But now Christ has taken on Himself all our past, present, *and future* sins, and so He never has to be sacrificed again. We are "Forgiven once for all." That is what grace is. Grace is the unmerited favor God places on you. Grace is meant to motivate you to love and serve the One who so loves you that He keeps you in His covenant even when we sin.

Forgiven. Our sins were never actually paid in the old covenant with its thousands of animal sacrifice. It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins (Heb.) Before Jesus died, God forbear punishing our sins. He passed over them until Calvary. But now that the punishment for our sins has been carried out on Jesus, God remembers them no more, and we truly are forgiven.

Romans 3:25 NIV — God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished.

Or here it is in Hebrews. Our sins were not redeemed at any point under the law of Moses. Only through Christ are they truly, forgiven, paid for, and forgotten.

Hebrews 9:15 CSB — Therefore, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

Micah 7:19-20 NKJV — He will again have compassion on us,

And will subdue our iniquities.

You will cast all our sins

Into the depths of the sea. You will give truth to Jacob

And mercy to Abraham,

Which You have sworn to our fathers

From days of old.

God swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob "In your seed shall all the nations of the Earth be

blessed." (Gen 22:18, Gen 26:4, Gen 28:14) Christ *is* the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

By His death, God blessed us all. He "subdued our iniquities. He cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

The question is, whether you will Believe whether God sees you as totally forgiven, spotless, and sinless in Christ. Any discipline we go through is not wrath. It is correction. If you will dare to believe the finished work of the Cross, you will see Him working more strongly in you.

Xxx The statements are repeated in pairs.

"Forgiven forever." Feelings of guilt will prevent you from approaching the throne of God with assurance that He will hear you. We *must know* how beloved, forgiven, and accepted we are in Christ, if we are going to *truly* expect God to answer us. I and many others have found a study on the book of Hebrews to help us understand what Christ has done to make us accepted by God. Hebrews chapters 7-10 especially explain Christ's finished work.

The ten commandments were "You shall do this" and "You shall not do that." They all start with "You."

Now look at the new covenant. Three times God says "I will do this or that."

"I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts."

"I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

"I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."

The new covenant is lived entirely by faith. But you can only trust God if you know your sins are forgiven. Otherwise, you will doubt whether God hears you, loves you, and accepts you. That is why it is so important to talk about God's forgiveness.

"They shall all know me ... *for* (meaning because) I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

Do you remember the thick veil that prevented anyone from entering the Holy of Holies, where God dwells? You could never know God because that veil separates you from Him. You had sins and a sinful nature, and those had to be dealt with before you could become worthy of being in the Presence of a holy God. A lot of people today feel like there is a veil between them and God when they pray. They haven't yet come to believe by faith the next provision: "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Matthew 27:51, Mark 15:38, and Luke 23:45 all record that when Jesus died, that veil was torn in two from top to bottom. Jesus

has made a way now for you to enter the Holy of Holies where you can know God, have fellowship with Him, and be in His glorious Presence. If you feel like there is still a veil between you and God when you pray, it is a lie. Maybe you do have unconfessed sin in your life hindering your walk with God. The moment you confess it, it is gone and you now have the right to closeness with God. But you need to *believe* that Christ's sacrifice has made you totally worthy. That could very well mean that you need to override your feelings and take your stand on the finished work of the Cross. Dare to believe that in Christ's love for you, He took it on Himself to complete everything needed to make you right and acceptable to God. It isn't by your works at all. One criminal dying next to Jesus called on Him for mercy, and he was forgiven. He had not done even one good work to earn that. He couldn't - he was nailed to a cross. But, because of his faith, Jesus forgave him. If your past still makes you feel unworthy to approach God and know Him deeply, then do like Paul and make a concrete effort to forget it. Philippians 3:13 KJV — ... this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before.

"They shall all know Me." In the old covenant, the focus was on keeping rules. But in the new covenant, the focus is on *knowing Him*. Jesus said John 17:3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Jeremiah 32:37-41, Jeremiah 33:7-8, and Jeremiah 33:14-18, also describe the new covenant, which you would do well to read.

Martin Luther said, we make the mistake of placing faith alongside other virtues. But faith is far above all of them. And trust virtues flow out of faith.

When Jesus was dying, He said "It is finished." Your forgiveness, redemption, and salvation were accomplished by Jesus when He died.

You say, "Then what is left for me to do?"

And I answer, "Believe."

John 6:28-29 NKJV — Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

Another great passage to describe the New Covenant is this. Daniel was among the exiles in Babylon. He began interceding for His nation that God would forgive it and restore it. An angel responded to Daniel what would happen in seventy weeks. Seventy weeks is 490 days.

Scholars say that in exactly 490 years (each day for a year) Jesus offered His life

Daniel 9:24 NKJV — "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city,

To finish the transgression,

To make an end of sins,

To make reconciliation for iniquity,

To bring in everlasting righteousness,

To seal up vision and prophecy, and

To anoint the Most Holy."

In the New Covenant *it is God* who will make an end of transgressions, sins, and iniquities. And *it is God* who will bring everlasting righteousness into our hearts by the Holy Spirit. Our job is to believe.

A third great passage about the new covenant is Ezekiel 36:16-37:28. This is too long to copy here, but I recommend you read it. Ezekiel, like Daniel, was living among the exiles from Judah. God tells Ezekiel in this passage that He will cleanse His people from their idols. He will put His Spirit in us and give us a new heart. And then God gives a vision to Ezekiel that is very deep but vital to understand.

Ezekiel sees himself in a valley that is full of dry bones. God asks him “Can these bones live?” He says “O Lord God, You know.” God tells him, “Prophesy to these bones, 'I will cause breath to enter into you, and you will live.'” Ezekiel prophesies as he was commanded. The bones became connected and muscle and skin came on them, but they had no breath. God tells Ezekiel to prophesy to the wind to breathe upon them so they will live. Ezekiel obeys, and they stood on their feet, being now a great army.

God tells Ezekiel that these bones are the whole house of Israel. Just as wind came into the bones and they lived, God says that He will place His Spirit in us, and we will live.

Friends, those bones are you and I. We were “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:8) just like these bones were dead. It is a fundamental truth of the Bible. But sadly, it is not something spoken about very much by pastors of today. But that is an important doctrine because you won't completely throw yourself on the saving power of Jesus if you don't really think you need it. You will just keep trusting that your own efforts can make yourself better. You won't know the power of His grace if you keep looking inward for strength. Read Romans 3:9-18 to see the wretchedness of the human nature. Those people don't need a self-improvement program. They need something far deeper. They need the living God to make them alive, wash the sin out of them, and plant righteousness inside them. If we found ourselves in a valley of dry bones, would we tell the bones to behave themselves, clean themselves up, and try harder? No. The only way those bones can live is if an outside Source breathes life into them. Spiritually, we have all been dead since Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. The only hope of having spiritual life, and the only hope of living the Christian life, is if God breathes the Spirit of Life in us.

God is totally aware of how corrupt human nature is. You and I might be shocked when we hear of depraved human behavior. Or we might be shocked when we see it in ourselves. Our sinful nature has been cut off in Christ, but it will still try to raise its ugly head in our lives. God knows full well about the fallen, dead condition of human nature. The good news is, His love never changes. He still loves us very much, and He wants to redeem us despite our sinfulness.

You might think your sins have made God reject you and give up on you. Let me encourage you: Jesus never judged people. He told the Pharisees “You judge by the flesh. I judge no man.” Friend, you have not sinned too far to escape His love. Come back to His grace. And this time, keep abiding in Him.

John 15:5 NIV — “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.”

Xxx count how many times.

In Ezekiel 36:24-28 look at how many times God says “I will.” Just like the Jeremiah passage, God is saying in the Ezekiel passage that in the new covenant, *God* will be the one taking the initiative. Almost all Christian messages I hear emphasize some virtue of Christianity that *you* need to do. But here we see in the New Covenant that it is *God* who will do the good works in you. *God* will place His virtues in you. How many messages have I heard that explain Christianity this way?

Only one, by Paul Washer.

In these three passages about the new covenant, I want you to see that it is all God’s doing. To Jeremiah, God says that He will write His law on our heart. To Ezekiel, God says that He will send the Holy Spirit to make the dead bones alive. To Daniel, God says He will make an end of our sins and bring in everlasting righteousness.

God knows the corruption of our sinful nature, but He loves us. He knows that if anything good is to be found in our spirits, He is the one who will have to make it happen.

Psalm 25:14 NKJV — The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, And He will show them His covenant.

Is this verse saying that to those who fear the Lord, He will reward them by giving them understanding of His covenant? I believe that is exactly what this verse says. Understanding the new covenant must be pretty important then, and it is what we are trying to do in this book.

(Remove this if pastors read.)

Compare your spiritual maturity now with who you’ve been in the past many years. Be honest. How much has all the teaching helped you? Some teaching is important. To some extent teaching can help us grow. But I’m sure a lot of you will say “I feel like I’m still the same person that I was many years ago. I don’t feel like I’ve grown.”

Maybe you are right. Maybe human nature actually is so corrupt that all the teaching in the world won’t help it. Maybe we are hopeless until the Holy Spirit lives the Christian life in us.

Psalm 40

Remember earlier how God told Samuel that *He* wanted to be their king (1 Samuel 8:7)? Now God will make a provision for that.

The following passages prophesy that God will raise up a king to sit on the throne of David. Jesus descends from David, and spiritually, He is King in Heaven, and He is King over our hearts.

Isaiah 9:7

Isaiah 16:5

Isaiah 55:3-4

Jeremiah 23:5

Jeremiah 30:9

Jeremiah 33:14-18

Ezekiel 34:23-24

Ezekiel 37:24-25

Hosea 3:5
Amos 9:11
Zechariah 12-13
Micah 5:1-6

Now, Christ did not rule the government when he lived on earth. But he does rule the government in heaven. And the kingdom of heaven lives in your heart.

Jesus was brought before Pilate.

John 18:33 NKJV — Then Pilate entered the Praetorium again, called Jesus, and said to Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Three verses later,

John 18:36 NKJV — Jesus answered, “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.”

People lose sight of the fact that Jesus is a king and he wants to rule every part of your heart and he will not share you with another.

Isaiah 9:6-7 KJV — For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

The old covenant cursed you for any small sin that you do.

The good news is that in the new covenant, Jesus has agreed to take on Himself all the sins that you do.

The first covenant declared you to be a sinner. The second covenant declared you to be righteous. If you are living under feelings of condemnation, you are living under the first covenant. Jesus took all your condemnation upon Himself. But you need to *believe* that. And then you will be set free, and a sense of joy and peace will come to you.

The new covenant is an expression of God's love. God is saying “I know humanity has a sinful nature. It is capable of great wickedness and depravity. I know they are powerless to overcome it. But I love them. They were made to know Me and to walk in righteousness. I still want this for them. So now, I Myself will address their sin problem. I will send My Son to them. He will offer His life to pay for their sin, to wash the sin out of their heart, and then to live inside them by the Holy Spirit. Then, I will truly be their God.”

“I will be their God.” There will be a desire in us that we will *want* to love Him with all of our hearts. God will finally perform that circumcision of the heart. God longs for us to be totally in love with Him and to share our hearts with nothing in this world. He will cause us to love Him and to want to love Him.

(Maybe move, or take out)

Jeremiah says,

Jeremiah 31:33 NKJV — “But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Ezekiel says,

Ezekiel 36:28 NKJV — “Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 37:27 NKJV — “My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

That is what God wanted in the old covenant.

Deuteronomy 29:12-13 NKJV — “that you may enter into covenant with the LORD your God, and into His oath, which the LORD your God makes with you today, “that He may establish you today as a people for Himself, and that He may be God to you, just as He has spoken to you, and just as He has sworn to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

(Maybe move)

The law seems to acknowledge that God needs to do a greater work in His people.

Deuteronomy 29:4 NKJV — “Yet the LORD has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.”

As if to say that one day the Lord *will* give them “a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear.”

This also expresses God's heart to truly be God to us in every sense of the word. (Yan).

God repeatedly foretells (find) in the old testament that He will raise up "David" to be their king. And we will know Him and serve Him. And in the realm of the Spirit, Jesus is King, and in our hearts, we do serve Him.

Circumcision. Deut 29-31

Genesis 15. Abraham slept during the covenant.

Ezekiel 11:17-20

Isaiah 59:20-21

What *is* the Christian life? Christian means Christ one. The Christian life looks like Christ.

Compare the holiness of Christ with Romans 3. Only a *miracle* would transform such people.

In short, the new covenant says that all of our sins will be forgiven. This means we will live in a covenant of peace. We will never need to sacrifice a lamb, because *The Lamb* has sacrificed Himself. Secondly, *God* will write His laws in our hearts. They will not be written on stone tablets for us to try to obey with our best efforts. There will not be any stone tablets because the Holy Spirit will indwell us and transform us. Thirdly, we will have *One King*. Instead of focusing on rules, we will seek to know the Lord and to love Him with all of our hearts.

Christ cuts the New Covenant

The last supper.

Propitiation in the tomb.

His shedding of blood.

Moses mixed blood and water, I think. Out of Jesus came blood and water. Hebrews 9:19 commentary.

Matthew 5:17-18 NKJV — “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. “For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled.

It was fulfilled when Jesus fulfilled its justice.

Galatians 3:13 NKJV — Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”),

The blood of Abel speaks “Avenge me by punishing the one who murdered me.”

The blood of Christ speaks “Their sins have been avenged and punished. Now forgive them, Father.”

Hebrews 12:24 NKJV — to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

At the tomb, there were two angels

John 20:12 NKJV — And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

The mercy seat.

The disciples were still talking about who would be the greatest, though Jesus had taught several times on humility. Neither did any take a stand for Jesus, though they had spent three years with Him.

Peter was comparing himself to others. Jesus taught on humility.

Peter denied Christ three times.

Jesus taught them not to deny Him.

Peter was even warned that he would deny Christ, and even that didn't stop him.

Until the Holy Spirit came to live in them, Jesus' teaching didn't change them. They didn't have the Holy Spirit on the inside to make His teachings a reality.

At Jesus' baptism, the Holy Spirit came and remained upon Jesus. After He fasted 40 days in the wilderness,

Luke 4:14 (KJV) And Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

I believe everything He did in His ministry was done at the direction of the Holy Spirit.

And now I want to share with you something about how our Lord lived His life here on Earth. I titled this book, "*You* don't live the Christian life. Christ Does". We fleshly beings need an indwelling Lord if we are to truly live The Christian life. But what about how Jesus lived His life? Jesus came in the flesh just like all of us (1 John 4:2-3). Now He didn't inherit sin from Adam because His mother became supernaturally pregnant by the Holy Spirit. But He still came into a physical human body. Jesus, who is God, lived His life by not doing anything of His own accord, just as we also are not supposed to turn to our own strength to live this life. This list came from Andrew Murray's book, "Humility." Look how many times Jesus used the words "not" and "nothing" when talking of Himself.

- The Son can do nothing of Himself. John 5:19
- I can of Myself do nothing. John 5:30
- I do nothing of Myself. John 8:28
- I do not seek my own will. John 5:30
- I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will. John 6:38
- I do not receive honor from Men. John 5:41
- I do not seek My own glory. John 8:50
- I have not come of Myself. John 7:28
- Nor have I come of Myself but He sent Me. John 8:42
- My doctrine is not Mine. John 7:16
- The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority. John 14:10
- The word which you hear is not Mine. John 14:24
- I have not spoken on My own authority. John 12:49

Jesus' humility shines brightly here. He never took it upon Himself to accomplish anything beyond what His Father said. He remained totally humble, totally dependent on His Father, and allowed nothing to interrupt His fellowship with the Father. There is not a trace of pride anywhere in these statements.

This is a sobering, humbling list. It convicts me whenever I read it because I am not able to say those things of myself.

Jesus came in the flesh, but He did not live by the flesh!

Paul said the same thing.

2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NKJV — For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ,

See the humility.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.

It is vital that we see that growing the Kingdom is *God's* responsibility. *Our* responsibility is to be faithful to Him. *We* keep our eyes on Jesus, abide in Him, and obey what He tells us. *He* is the one who brings about growth. If we have this perspective, it will keep us humble and focused on Christ, which He wanted all along. Christ wants our love and obedience. *He* will grow His Kingdom.

“The Son can do nothing of Himself.”

How many seminars and lessons go against this principle by teaching how to do something *by ourselves*? They teach how *you* can grow a big church, how *you* can write a good sermon, how *you* can lead a Bible study. It is the work of man and it has limited results. How about we humble ourselves and acknowledge our need for God's direction? As one minister said, “God blesses what God does.” God will bless what is done *with Him* more than what is done *for Him*.

I will briefly say, Please don't use the above as an excuse to do nothing, or to wait for very specific direction when you already know His will. You will be like the servant with the one mina. Luke 19:20-21 NKJV — “Then another came, saying, ‘Master, here is your mina, which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. ‘For I feared you, because you are an austere man. You collect what you did not deposit, and reap what you did not sow.’

This servant already had direction from his master: “Do business until I come” (vs. 13). Now the master did not say specifically *how* to trade and make money. That would be the responsibility of the servant. We also are not often told *how* to accomplish God's work. We need to step out in faith that God will help us as we try. Perhaps you will fail in your first few attempts. But you must still keep trying. This fearful servant was too afraid to take any steps of faith, and he missed the master's will.

God will *test* your love for Him. It will require risk. This man did not want to risk his only mina, and so he sadly failed to love and obey his master all the way. God will be with you, even if you take a risk you were not supposed to. So be bold. It is better to try and fail, than to not even try to obey God.

The word “Father” is in the book of John 111 times. Do you see how incredibly vital Jesus' connection to the Father is, that He mentioned the Father so many times? And we are called to abide in Christ as He abides in His Father.

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness before starting His ministry. This is where He was tempted by the devil and overcame all temptations. The Israelites spent 40 years in the wilderness before they also began to conquer the Promised Land. For both of them it was a time of dying to the flesh. And after Jesus left the wilderness,

Luke 4:14 NKJV — Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news of Him went out through all the surrounding region.

Jesus lived His life by the power of the Spirit. How did He end His life?

Hebrews 9:14 NKJV — how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

So while He performed His ministry for three years, He was dead to the flesh, and He was yielded to the Spirit. When the time came for Him to suffer a most agonizing death on the Cross, He again denied His own desire and yielded to the Spirit. He had spent His life doing this. The Power by which He did miracles was the same Power by which He laid down His life in a way that is far too brutal for any of us to go through.

2 Corinthians 11:3 NASB20 — But I am afraid that, as the serpent deceived Eve by his trickery, your minds will be led astray from sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

“Sincere and pure devotion to Christ.” Christ is a *living* being. You are called to know Him deeply.

1 Corinthians 1:9 KJV — God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

John 6:53 KJV — Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

And again,

John 15:5 NASB20 — “... for apart from Me you can do nothing.”

2 Corinthians 12:19 — Again, think ye that we excuse ourselves unto you? we speak before God in Christ: but we do all things, dearly beloved, for your edifying.

Before God. Paul speaks as into the Lord, knowing he will give account of every word to God.

In Christ. It isn't Paul speaking these words. He is speaking what the Lord gives to him.

For your edifying. Paul loves the Corinthians. He will say what they need to hear.

This is like Jesus, speaking what the Father gives Him. Who is blind but My Servant? He will not judge? with His ears but in righteousness.

Jesus delighted in the fear of the Lord (Isaiah verse). He did not concern Himself with what anyone thought of Him. He lived “as seeing Him who is unseen.” Add verse.

Shortly before Jesus dies and sheds His blood, He tells His disciples about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16. Remember how the old covenant was ratified by the shedding of animal blood and by the reading of the law? Here, Jesus is about to ratify the new covenant, but it will be by the shedding of His own blood and His pledging to send the Holy Spirit to us. Do you see how the old covenant is a shadow of the new? When the people said “All that the LORD hath said, we will do, and be obedient,” they were saying that they will try with their efforts to keep the law. But Jesus didn't give us a new set of commands on stone to follow. No. He dealt with our sin nature head on and sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Now, we will truly keep the law, but not because we are trying to keep it, but because Christ has transformed our hearts, and now we keep it by nature.

Jesus said

John 14:26 KJV — But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

I have said before that *Christ* lives this life in us. But it may appear from the verse above that the Holy Spirit is the one speaking to us and changing us. That is true. He is the one speaking to us. But, in the next verse, Jesus seems to say that when the Holy Spirit comes to us, Jesus is coming to us.

John 14:18 KJV — I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

In the old covenant, Moses stood between man and God, mediating between them, and giving the people God's commands. But now, Jesus will share God's will with us in our heart. And when Jesus is speaking to us and putting His desires in us, He is acting as the mediator of the new covenant.

Hebrews 8:6 KJV — But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

Romans 8:3 NKJV — For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh ... God gave Moses the law, but it was up to *you* with your weak attempts of the flesh, to keep it. The Jews did not have the Holy Spirit to keep the law inside them. They had only their flesh to rely on to keep it. And as we have seen, flesh is corrupt. And so it will be weak at keeping the law.

Friends, this Bible is divided into two treatments, the old, which is lived by the law and it came by Moses. And the new, which is lived by the Holy Spirit, and came through Jesus. But together they create one book. It's about time that people see how the Bible is one redemption story and it all goes together. I hope this message is helping you find out how.

In the old covenant, your allegiance was to a law written in stones. But in the new covenant, your allegiance is to a person, to Jesus. Will you take the time to get to know Him deeply? If you feel unworthy of Him, remember that He is your great High Priest. He is alive forever, and He is always interceding for you.

Hebrews 7:24-25 NKJV — But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

The people said at the cutting of the first covenant, All that the Lord has said, we will do.

But, when Jesus was cutting the second covenant, He said, It is finished.

Hebrews 9:19 Water and blood.

So shall He sprinkle many nations.

For so much of my own life, I have felt the need to perform for people. If I do good enough at my task, I will be accepted. But if not, then I'm in trouble. And so I was always fearful of whether I would measure up.

But we God it doesn't work this way at all. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And Christ's death, His payment for all of my sins, makes me totally acceptable to God. All I need to do is believe that.

Ephesians 2:8-9 NKJV — For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.

Isaiah 28:9-13 The word of the Lord was to them precept upon precept. Rules, religion, tradition, Do's and Don'ts.

Isaiah 28:9-13 NKJV — “Whom will he teach knowledge?

And whom will he make to understand the message?

Those just weaned from milk?

Those just drawn from the breasts? For precept must be upon precept, precept upon precept,

Line upon line, line upon line,

Here a little, there a little.” For with stammering lips and another tongue

He will speak to this people, To whom He said, “This is the rest with which

You may cause the weary to rest,”

And, “This is the refreshing”;

Yet they would not hear. But the word of the LORD was to them,

“Precept upon precept, precept upon precept,

Line upon line, line upon line,

Here a little, there a little,”

That they might go and fall backward, and be broken

And snared and caught.

Now you learn *this* lesson. And next week you learn *that* lesson. Here a little Christianity, and there a little Christianity. No, my friend. Christianity is not precepts, rules, and lessons! It is Jesus Himself coming to live His life in you because He knows you are not able to live the Christian life without Him. And thus Christianity really will give you rest, and it really will bring refreshing to you. *You* aren't doing anything but abiding in Him. And so, *you* will have rest, and *you* will be refreshed, because *you* aren't doing the Christian life, *He* is doing it in you!

Now, to be fair, if you are dealing with baby Christians, “Those just weaned from milk”, then it actually is appropriate to give them light, soft precepts and rules.

1 Corinthians 3:1-3 NKJV — And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? And I am sad to say, but the church in America is very carnal. We are becoming a nation that cannot tell right from wrong. And besides that, there is so much selfishness which goes undetected because it is not an obvious sin like stealing. So preaching on sin, and on morality, on precepts, should still have a place.

Selfishness is something God wants to rid from us because

Philippians 2:20-21 NKJV — For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

So much of our Christian walk has become “learned behavior.” That is what Isaiah calls “Here a little, there a little.” It is not supposed to be this way. The Holy Spirit resides in your *heart*. But behavior that you learn resides in your *head*.

If the Holy Spirit resides in our heart, we ought to become driven from our heart, by what you believe, and by who you truly are. But if you are led by your head, you are not being real with people. You are just doing what you are “supposed” to do. You aren't doing it from the goodness of your heart, but because you are trying to keep the rules.

Paul spends so much time in His letters explaining what Christ has done for us, so that we will boast in *Him*. If he were to spend most of his letters telling us what we must do for Him, our boast would be in *ourselves*.

Xxx

None of the Christian life has to be dead works anymore! Jesus loves you, and now, everything can be done *in relationship*.

Someone may ask, “If the new covenant is better than the old covenant, why did God even give us the old covenant?”

Galatians 3:19 NKJV — What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.

And a few verses later,

Galatians 3:22-24 NKJV — But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

And,

Romans 5:20 NKJV — Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

God needs us to know that no amount of rules, effort, and religion can change anyone. Only Jesus Christ living inside you can change you. It took 1400 years to bring us to the end of ourselves.

Romans chapter 7 of about someone who puts himself under the law. And Paul is finding out for himself that it doesn't work:

Romans 7:18 NKJV — For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find.

And,

Romans 7:21-23 — I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

The law is a way for a person to try *in their own efforts* to be righteous. But it did nothing to rid Paul from “the sin which is in his members” (his flesh). And now in the next verse he comes to

the humbling realization that he needs someone *outside of himself* if he is ever going to be delivered from sin.

Romans 7:24 — O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?

The whole point of the old covenant was to bring the Jews to the realization that their nature is corrupt and they need a *Savior* if they want to live righteous. And now Paul has finally come to this realization also. This is where God wants us to arrive. May God bring us to this place where we, like the Jews and like Paul, can say what he said in verse 24.

And the good news is, Jesus will deliver us! Yes, the same One that we are sinning against, who has every right to be angry with us and hold our sins against us, He it is who has promised not to condemn us, but to deliver us! He loves us! He is good! He will never reject us for confessing to him how sinful we are. He will *forgive* us after confessing that.

How much preaching do we hear that puts the onus on us to stop sinning? “Try harder”, they say. But the biblical way to defeat sin is for Someone to deliver you out of your sin, Jesus. If you discover this, then you can rejoice with Paul on the next verse.

Romans 7:25 NKJV — I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! ...

Paul boasts in *Jesus*, not in his own efforts to be righteous.

There is the sinful flesh, and there is the religious flesh. Romans 6 addresses the sinful flesh, and Romans 7 addresses the religious flesh. But they are two sides of the same coin. Friends, apart from the Holy Spirit, you are flesh!

Do you ever wonder why sinners heard Jesus much more readily than the Pharisees did? Jesus knows the depravity of the human condition, and He doesn't judge us. The Pharisees, though, are unaware of their sinful nature. They think they are able to fix themselves if they try harder and add more rules. But Jesus came because *He* wants to be their righteousness and their Lord. It is difficult to convince religious people of their wretched condition. But if they don't see it, they will keep turning to themselves to live this life. Or they will say, “I just need *a little* help from Jesus.” That person isn't throwing himself upon the grace of God. And they certainly aren't making Jesus their Lord, because they think they can manage their own life.

Someone will ask, “If I believe I have a corrupt nature that I am powerless to overcome, won't I have low self-esteem?”

To that I respond, “When you come to trust that Almighty God made a covenant with you that is signed in the blood of Christ, then you will learn to let God be your sufficiency, your helper, the One who will never forsake you. So the truth of the matter is, God will always be with us, to help us and to love us. With God as our strength, we won't have low self-esteem. We won't “feel bad about ourselves” because it's not us, our strength, or our sufficiency that gets us through life. It's His. And we know that God is more than able to overcome anything, and therefore so are we.

The enormity, the power, the significance of Christ's sacrifice. If we don't understand our fallen condition, if we don't see how helpless we are to defeat sin, we won't come to understand what Christ accomplished for us.

Jesus' death on the Cross:
Condemned sin in the flesh
Paid for my sin
Washed the sin out of my heart
Crucified my flesh
Completed the law of Moses
Took me out of the law of Moses
Inaugurated a New Covenant

Christ mediates the New Covenant to us. He is our life, He is our substance, He is our everything. Look at the seven I AM statements in John. *You* aren't these things to yourself. Christ is. It's all Jesus

In the law it says, This is your life, if you do them. Find. But now Jesus is our life.

Will you humble yourself, turn your brain off, put your eyes on Jesus, worship Him, stay pure and holy, and obey Him?

See how intimate that is, that He wants to personally be these seven things to? Why would He do that? Because He loves you. The blood of Christ makes you spotless and pure in His sight, so that now He can be very close to you.

John 1:14 NKJV — And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

The old covenant showed God's justice. But it did not show God's heart of love. Jesus will reveal that heart to us. The God in the old testament is the same God in the new testament. We see from the law of Moses that God is holy, He is just, and He hates sin. But we see in Jesus that God is also love, He is merciful, and He is full of grace.

John 1:16-17 NKJV — And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Jesus (not the law) is the image of the Father.

John 1:18 NKJV — No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Psalms 22. My God, My God, Why have You forsaken Me?

It is finished.

It is all *His* doing.

He has done it.

Isaiah 44:22 KJV — I have blotted out, as a thick cloud, thy transgressions, and, as a cloud, thy sins: return unto me; for I have redeemed thee.

And what is the proper response of God blotting out our transgressions?

Isaiah 44:23 KJV — Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

That ought to be a more famous verse.

We don't preach a law or religion. We preach Jesus! He is a great king

Acts 8:35 NKJV — Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him.

Acts 17:18 NKJV — Then certain Epicurean and Stoic philosophers encountered him. And some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign gods," because he preached to them Jesus and the resurrection.

Revelation 19:16 NKJV — And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

If we are going to live this Christian Life, we must keep our eyes on the master and continually worship Him. It is so easy for me to look at the shortcomings of the church in America. I feel there is a lot of correction she needs. For you, the distraction may be something totally different. But the way I will be most useful in this world is to worship Jesus, for then He will transform me into His likeness. He will speak to me, and He will begin to use me.

If you say, "It is finished" to Christians, they will object on two grounds.

1. They will say, that isn't what they preach on Sunday. The pastors all speak of things we need to do, things we need to avoid, ways to become better Christians, and areas that we need to improve in.
2. They will say, this is not my experience. I still see sin in me. I have wrong thoughts and sometimes do wrong things. It really doesn't look like "It is finished."

Friends, you can go on believing that no it is not finished. You can believe that you still need to contribute to the Christian Life. And you will struggle and stress to be a good Christian if you believe this.

Or, you can take Jesus at his word. You can worship Him and be filled with gratitude because when he said it is finished, he meant it. And he will produce the Christian Life In You if you trust that He did finish everything on the Cross.

Scripture often does not record what Jesus taught. But it does record that Jesus taught. For example,

...

Why would the Scripture focus more on the ministry of Christ than on the teaching of Christ?

As I've been saying up to this point, our eyes belong on Christ, not the law, and not teaching.

Paul was not one of the twelve disciples of Christ. He may have heard little to none of Christ teaching when Christ walked the Earth. But through believing Jesus and maintaining close fellowship with Him, he was transformed into His likeness, even without hearing the teachings of Jesus.

In short, it is faith and relationship with Christ that will transform you, and not the teachings of Christ.

James Hudson Taylor was saved by reading the phrase "The Finished Work of Christ." The cross completed the forgiveness of sins for us, He wondered, what then was left for man to do. And it occurred to him, nothing, but to gratefully receive His forgiveness and praise Him forever and ever for it.

Add Genesis 15 to this chapter.

I want to take you to a story that is mysterious, yet profound.

What happened in the old testament was a shadow of what Christ would fulfill (Colossians 2:17 and Hebrews 10:1). Circumcision was given to Abraham, but that was a shadow of the true circumcision that Christ would perform (Colossians 2:11). Genesis 15 records the story of how Abraham will know that God will give him the land.

Add to this.

Most of us know that the Israelites had to sacrifice an animal in the old testament to be forgiven. Yet the sin offering was just one type of offering prescribed in the law.

The five types of offerings are:

- burnt offering
- grain offering
- peace offering
- sin offering
- trespass offerin.

Jesus' death was so great that it fulfilled all of these sacrifices. Psalm 40:6-8 NKJV — Sacrifice and offering You did not desire;

My ears You have opened.

Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require. Then I said, "Behold, I come;

In the scroll of the book it is written of me. I delight to do Your will, O my God,

And Your law is within my heart."

Do you see how tremendous Christ's love for you is, that His death on the Cross fulfilled all of these types of sacrifices? There is nothing left for you to do. That is how complete His sacrifice is. The best way to honor the Cross is to believe such love is given to you personally. Allow the assurance of His forgiveness to enter your heart, and be thankful for it.

Loved people love people. In other words, those who humble themselves and open their hearts to receive God's love, these people will love others the best. If you want to love people more, then believe God's incredible love for you.

There is no shortage to His grace. If you fall a thousand times a day, then a thousand times thank Him for loving you and forgiving you. And if you don't remember to do that a thousand times, don't fear. The moment you repent, all of your sin is put away, even if it is a lot.

End

Completely Loved and Forgiven of all sins

(Maybe take out).

I dare say that this is the most important chapter in the book. I am convinced that *this* is the guiding principle of Apostle Paul for how he walked his Christian life.

A great provision of the new covenant is that we will forever have peace with God and be forgiven of our sins. Earlier we looked at Jeremiah 31 and Ezekiel 36-37 because they describe the new covenant.

“For I will forgive their sins.”

Well wait, didn't God forgive sins in the old testament?

God *passed over them*. The wrath of all the sins committed in the old covenant was placed in Jesus. And *now*, God can truly forget them.

Hebrews 9:15 CSB — Therefore, he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance, because a death has taken place for redemption from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

“For I will forgive their sins.” And this God fulfilled. He forgave all our sins (past, present, and future) when Jesus died for us.

Hebrews 9:25-28 NKJV — not that He should offer Himself often, as the high priest enters the Most Holy Place every year with blood of another— He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation.

Repeatedly in Leviticus, when an animal was sacrificed, *then* God would forgive them. But here, Jesus offered up Himself *once for all time*. And that means that He doesn't need to offer Himself again for you to be forgiven again the next time you sin. *You remain forgiven*. God promised that in the new covenant He would forgive our sins, and He forgave all of them indeed, on the Cross.

After Jesus appeared to Saul, He said “Arise.” It is like Jesus is saying, “Your sins are totally washed away. I remember them no more. Don't hang your head low. You are now a child of God and spotless in His sight.”

“Master, fill me with *Your* Spirit, with the way *You* feel, and move, and live. That I will have the same thoughts, feelings, heart, and emotions that *You* do.”

“God, help me. I feel proud.”

"You have nothing to boast of. Salvation is completely the work of Christ. It is all by His grace. He died and rose again for your sins, apart from any merit or good work you have done. So give Him the glory."

Maintaining your close walk with the Lord is your highest calling. It is what He really wants from you.

But, maintaining a close walk with Jesus will also enable you to be used more by Him to win people to Him.

Do you see how important it is to know the Lord personally and deeply?

We ought to do that for *His* sake, because *He* ways us to. And as a benefit, He will use us more to bring lost souls to Him.

Please take everything out of your heart so that all your praise, thoughts, and affections go on Him.

If we don't realize this, if we don't believe how accepted and adored we are by God, everything we do will become self-righteous. It will be works of your human effort to try and earn something from God.

"I get so stressed."

"Maybe I haven't understood that I have peace with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't have to be perfect, and I don't have to perform for anyone. Jesus accomplished my peace. He will never judge me, He will never condemn me. Since I have peace with God, there really is nothing to fear. Even if the worst things happen, I go to Heaven. I have a sure house there, laid up in store for me. Glory to Jesus Christ."

Much stress comes from fear that I am breaking the rules of man or of God. Or it is a fear that I am not performing up to someone's expectations of me. But I am saved and kept by God by the Cross of Jesus Christ. And if God Himself saves and keeps me by his grace apart from my works and apart from my performance, then I really don't need to put any pressure on myself to perform. People's expectations of me and opinions of me don't matter. Only God's opinion of me matters. And His opinion of me is that I am forgiven and spotless and pure because of the blood of Jesus Christ. I need not try to please anyone on this Earth.

Hebrews 10:17-18 NKJV — then He adds, "Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin.

The old Covenant was full of condemnation. Any sin at all would cause condemnation to happen to a person. But in the New Covenant there is no condemnation. Jesus took the condemnation of the world on himself when he died one time on the Cross. That means he took my condemnation on himself. In the Old Testament they kept sacrificing animals again and again and again for sin. But Christ sacrificed himself one time for the sin of the whole world. I do not need to bring sacrifices again and again to God. Nor does Christ have to die again and again. If I were to be condemned after every sin, then yes Christ would have to die again the pardon me for my sin. But if I am not condemned after my sins in the New Testament, and Christ does not need to die again and again. And that is the way things are. Christ does not need to die again

and again. Sin no longer condemns me. It may have consequences but condemnation is not one of them.

As was said earlier, God gave them the ten commandments at Mount Sinai. The mountain was smoking, thunder was roaring, and if any person or animal touched the mountain, it must die. Hebrews 12:21 NKJV — And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, “I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.”)

And this is the fear many Christians have.

Hebrews 12:22-24 NKJV — But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels ... to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.

The blood of innocent Abel that was murdered says, “Avenge me.” The blood of Jesus speaks, “Paid in full.” And so now we have peace with God through the blood of Jesus. We do not need to tremble and stay away from God as they did at Mount Sinai.

Thankfulness will be a natural response for one who truly receives what Christ accomplished for him on the Cross.

Hebrews 13:15 NKJV — Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.

It may sound too good to be true that Jesus loved me, died for me, and is giving me salvation as a free gift, without me having done anything. But go back to the garden of Eden. Suppose that Adam and Eve had eaten from the Tree of life. In that case all of humanity would be born into Paradise. And not one of us would have done anything to deserve it. We would live in Paradise on account of the obedience of one man, Adam.

Romans 5:19 NKJV — For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

God did it this way so that no one would boast. If Adam had eaten from the Tree of life, we would live in Paradise not by our obedience but by Adam's. But now that Jesus has paid for our sins, we can live in Paradise, not by our obedience, but by Christ's. In either case, no one who is saved will boast that they earned it.

(Maybe take out) Research.

If you have read the Bible, you may notice as I did, that God seems to be a wrathful God in the old testament but a merciful God in the new testament. I believe that is because after Jesus died, God's wrath has been satisfied, and now He will show mercy.

Isaiah 54:8 NKJV — With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment; But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,” Says the LORD, your Redeemer.

(Maybe add to different chapter)

Look at what happens with legalism.

Galatians 5:15 NKJV — But if you bite and devour one another, beware lest you be consumed by one another!

Galatians 5:26 NKJV — Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Why does Paul have to warn them about devouring one another? Because putting yourself under the law will cause you to not walk in love. Maybe preachers would say to the Galatians, “Stop fighting with each other!” But that is just a symptom of being under the law. If the Galatians knew how much they were loved, and if they understood that they are under grace, *then* they would be treating each other better.

Paul warns Titus about the legalistic circumcision group:

Titus 1:12 NKJV — One of them, a prophet of their own, said, “Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons.”

And what does Paul say to Titus? Rebuke their lying and their laziness? No! Those are just the symptoms. Here is the next verse.

Titus 1:13-14 NKJV — This testimony is true. Therefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith, not giving heed to Jewish fables and commandments of men who turn from the truth.

Titus is commanded to rebuke their legalism. Being under the burden of the law will sap the joy out of anyone, make them depressed, and turn them lazy. But if they become dead to the law and become sound in the faith of the Son of God who loved them and died for them, they will no longer want to be liars, evil beasts, and lazy gluttons.

For you to have a real relationship with someone, you have to know that they don't judge you and condemn you for your faults.

John 8:15 NKJV — “You judge according to the flesh; I judge no one.”

The law will judge you left and right. It was given to show God's perfect justice. But the law does Not show God's perfect love. Jesus does. For every sin where the law would condemn you, Jesus came to save you.

John 3:17 NKJV — “For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”

Seeing that He came not to condemn us but to save us, you should have complete trust in His goodness toward you.

One day we will die, and *then* He will judge us (Hebrews 9:27). But until then, the invitation is open for anyone to receive the forgiveness of their sins by believing that Jesus loved them and died for them.

Do you believe that? You should. It is the gospel message. But it will do you no good if you don't believe (Hebrews 4:2).

Psalms 110:4 NKJV — The LORD has sworn and will not relent, “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.”

Hebrews 7:25 NKJV — Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

It was this principle of realizing that I am totally forgiven of my sins that I needed to realize in order for me to have victory in my life. I will go into more detail when I share my testimony in the last chapter.

I've learned that faith means that you expect God to bless you and come through for you on account of Jesus making you right and acceptable in his sight. One of the greatest sins in the Bible is when the Israelites did not believe God to give them the promised Land. They wandered the wilderness for 40 years because there was a certain day when they decided to march back to Egypt in fear that they would be defeated if they fought for the promised Land. Joshua and Caleb spoke to the people just before they decided to go back to Egypt. What they said to the people deserves to be remembered.

Numbers 14:8 NKJV — “If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, ‘a land which flows with milk and honey.’”

In other words, the people didn't trust God to give them the land because they didn't believe that God delighted in them. This was their tenth (and largest) sin in the wilderness (Num. 14:22). But God had been forgiving them again and again up to this point. If they had truly believed they were fully pardoned and that God delighted in them, then they would have trusted God to fight for them. And they would have conquered the promised Land.

Joshua 1:1-9 We've got to know God is with us and will not forsake us, if we are going to be strong and courageous for God. This is why it's important to understand that God will always delight in you. If you that the Almighty will always love you, keep you, and help you in trouble, you will have the courage to make risky decisions. God *won't* forsake you in them.

Now,

(Maybe include third day against Benjamites) They sacrificed on the third day, to stir up faith in the covenant.

Maybe include Hebrews 8:1. The main point of what he is saying is that we have such a high priest.

Hebrews 4:16 NKJV — Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

But what is the basis for having such boldness? Should we be bold just for the sake of being bold and because it tells us to be bold? No. Let's look at the two verses before this.

Hebrews 4:14-15 NKJV — Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.

So there is our answer. We have a right to be bold because we have a faithful high priest in heaven who loves us, who understands what we are going through, and who is always interceding to God for us. Our great high priest makes us acceptable to God. And now being perfectly accepted in His sight, we can be bold without fear that He will reject us.

Exodus 29:38-42 describes a *continual* burnt offering that the Israelites were commanded to make as a “sweet aroma” to God. Every single day the priests would sacrifice two lambs, one in the morning, and one in the evening.

The sacrifices of the old testament all point to Jesus. Jesus is our continual burnt offering. Yes, He offered Himself 2000 years ago. But, Jesus is able to always intercede, to always remind God, to always, to continually present the burnt offering of Himself before the throne on our behalf.

Hebrews 10:20 NET — by the fresh and living way that he inaugurated for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,

Do you see that word “fresh”? The Greek word for it is *prosphatos*. It means “freshly slaughtered.” The sacrifice of Jesus is before the Father “freshly slaughtered.”

Revelation 5:6 NKJV — And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, ... God never gets tired of beholding the Lamb that was slain. The Lamb is continually presented before the Father. The Lamb always remains a fresh sacrifice to God. If you feel you have sinned too much, or too often with the same thing or that you have exhausted the limits of God’s forgiveness, God will not get tired of forgiving you. The sacrifice of Jesus is always new and fresh, a “sweet aroma” to God.

Galatians 2:20 NKJV — “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

Why does Paul live by the faith that Jesus loved him and gave himself for him? Paul understood something about the depravity of the human condition. He certainly was not going to find the resources of living the Christian life in himself. Look at the preceding verses. But we will look at it in the Message paraphrase because it explains what I have been saying so far.

Xxx

Either you in your efforts can try to live the Christian life. Or, you can walk with great assurance, faith, and trust that Jesus loved you and gave Himself for you. And you will be filled with gratitude and peace.

Christ's riches are unsearchable, unfathomable. Do not despair of having sinned too far to be forgiven.

Ephesians 3:8 NKJV — To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,

In this same chapter Paul writes

Ephesians 3:17-19 NKJV — that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height— to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

The love of Christ is so infinite that you cannot understand it. You can only experience it and believe it. And it's very important that you do. Why? Look at the next phrase: “that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.” That is the goal that humanity is trying to attain. We want the fullness of God. And the answer to it is right here. If you want the fullness of God, you must know the great love of Christ! You cannot measure the width and length and depth and height of His love. It *passes* knowledge. It passes what all of your mind, your analyzing, your thinking, can understand. Such love is revealed to us by the Spirit, who lives in your *heart*, not your head.

And I want to say, this is the same thing Paul wrote in the verse that is the theme for this book. Galatians 2:20 NKJV — “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

If you want to know the fullness of God, if you want Christ to live His life in you, then you must know His love, you must have faith in the Son of God who loved you, with a love so great that it cannot be grasped with the understanding.

Paul wasn't walking the Christian life by his understanding. That would be the flesh. Paul walked it by his heart, by knowing Jesus and by believing His infinite love. He had fullness of faith.

Stephen had fullness of faith, and look how God mightily used him. He was full of faith and power. I believe when God saw his faith, then He granted him the power.
(Add more).

(Where to place).

1 Peter 1:13 NKJV — Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;
Set your hope (of salvation) fully on grace, not on your works or the law.

Do you think when the disciples walked the Earth with Jesus that they had fear for anything? No. With Jesus by their side, they had all their needs met. If someone got sick, Jesus would heal them. They knew that Jesus, in His love, would provide for all their needs.

Colossians 1:12 NKJV — giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Dare To Believe, that the Cross has made me right and pleasing in God's sight.

This is a saying that may deliver many people. “Dare to believe.” Believe, you are totally forgiven and pleasing in His sight.

Many people think, “My sins are too many for God to forgive.” But that is not true.

Look at the incredible mercies of Christ here. It appears like the mercies of Jesus are more than all the sins caused by Adam. So have great assurance in Christ's love and forgiveness.

Can I remove the parentheses?

Romans 5:15-19 NKJV — (But the free gift is not like the offense. For if by the one man's offense many died, much more the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many. And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned. For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification. For if by the one man's offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.) Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's

righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous.

1 Corinthians 3:14-15 NKJV — If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

They are under grace. If their work burns up, they certainly do not deserve to enter Heaven, seeing they wasted their time and money on Earth. But God keeps His covenant of peace, and so they still have peace with God, though they did little for Him.

Romans 8:15 NKJV — For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father."

The law curses and condemns everyone. It puts you in a spirit of fear. But in the new covenant we are kept by grace. Look at that language, "Abba, Father." Abba is how Jewish children addressed their fathers. It means the same as "Papa" or "Daddy". When children are young, they know they cherished, valued, and adored by their father. They expect nothing but love from their father. The law puts fear in you that you will be cursed or rejected. But children can draw close to their father without having any fear they will be cursed or rejected. They are free to receive all the love that their father has for them. This is how it is now with us. We are no longer under the law of Moses with its condemnation and fear. Father God has only love for us, infinite and inexpressible. It surpasses the understanding. God doesn't want us dwelling on our understanding, which is the flesh. And so it is critical that we receive such fathomless love from the Father into our hearts. For then we will love God back, and we will love people as well.

1 John 4:19 NKJV — We love Him because He first loved us.

It is critical that we get the order right. God first loved us, and when we believe that, that enables us to love Him back. If you think you have to love God in order to make Him love you, you have put yourself under the law and you are going to have lots of fear and other problems.

Remember the first commandment? It is to love God. The verse above says to love God, you must first receive *His* love for you.

Go back to our theme. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." Receiving His love by faith will cause you to love Him back.

You may be going through a very tough trial. Perhaps all of your circumstances are against you. You may wonder, where is God? Has he left me? Have I sinned too much? Why am I going through this if He loves me?

You must never forget, Jesus came to Earth to die and pay for all of your sins. Sometimes God allows us to go through the fire. But that is not a sign of whether God loves you. The sign that God loves you is Jesus dying on the cross for you, with his arms wide open, saying, Father, forgive them. The Gospel of Jesus Christ dying for your sins never changes. So don't try to base God's love for you by your circumstances. Base it on the fact that Jesus loved you and paid for all of your sins and has made you righteous, pure, and accepted in God's sight.

Romans 4:4-5 NKJV — Now to him who works, the wages are not counted as grace but as debt. But to him who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness,

That's right. Dare to believe that Jesus has justified the ungodly person that you are. This verse should be more famous. Because it acknowledges we are ungodly, and at the same time says that we should believe God to be the very one who will justify the ungodly people that we all are. Don't hide your sin. Realize Jesus loves you, and he came for the very reason to justify sinners like you and I.

Look at how strong this next verse is.

Galatians 2:21 NKJV — "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

If you think your right standing with God comes through your works, then Christ died in vain. Whoa.

The forgiveness of all of your sins through Christ, the peace that you have with God through the Cross (and not through yourself), is very important for you to receive by faith in your heart. It is part, it is a provision, of the New Covenant. It is repeated several times that this is a provision God gifts to you. Will you not be thankful and grateful to God for this?

1 Peter 1:7 NKJV — that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,

Our faith is more precious than gold tried by fire. So it is very important to God that we believe His love and enter His rest.

(Maybe take out).

Our faith causes us to glorify Him. And we exist for His glory.

Maybe last night you really struggled with some sin. If Christian men get honest, most will admit they struggle with lust. It could be so easy to feel guilt and shame for this, and to assume that God isn't interested in hearing sinners like ourselves. But do you really think that His love or His grace have stopped? No they haven't. Be encouraged by all that Christ has done to make you acceptable to the Father, apart from your own works.

His mercies are new *every* morning. Yes, repent of your sin. But don't ever think that His love has stopped. Christ agreed to take all your sins. Now receive that, and worship Him for this.

This is the death of all religion. For we teach that Christians are under grace, not the law. And if the burden of having good-enough works is removed, you are free to love and serve Christ without fear, guilt, or shame.

Copy death of religion reasons from crucified with Christ.

Yet, I give a warning here. Even in the epistle that champions grace, Galatians, Paul warns them:

Galatians 5:19-21 NKJV — Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Ephesians 3. The infinite love of Christ. It does not live in your head, but in your understanding. Such infinite love cannot fit in your head. Which means the Christian life cannot come from your head. You don't live the Christian life, Christ does.

1 John 4:19 NKJV — We love Him because He first loved us.

Do you see how important it is for you to believe God's love for you? Receiving His love will enable you to keep the great commandment and love God with all your heart.

When it comes to correcting and rebuking Christians, or is important to remind them that Jesus loves them. To the church in Laodicea, Jesus called them lukewarm and said that He will spew them out of His mouth. But it is very important to remember that He also told them this.

Revelation 3:19 NKJV — “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent.

That word “love” by the way is not agape. It is the word phileo. And this word carries the idea of fondness and affection, or to like someone. Jesus wanted this church to love Him zealously. But you *must* see that He first loves you this way. And then your conscience will remain clean, fear of judgment won't be there, and you can love Him back knowing He welcomes you and won't cast you away.

Heidi Baker is a missionary in Mozambique. She reaches out to the poorest of the poor. She goes to the garbage dumps and loves on the gangsters there. They cuss her out, throw stones at her, and even beat her up. She just keeps loving them *for years* and telling them about Jesus who loves them and died for them. She has had *many* a convert who came to Christ because they saw a love in her that they had never seen anywhere else. In this world that teaches you to watch out for yourself, to get even with people, and to cut people off who offend you, Heidi's love stands out as a great contrast.

It is absolutely vital for you to have the assurance that your sins are forgiven, that God delights in you through Christ, then you are his child, and that he can use you right now for his kingdom. If you don't believe that, then you are tempting god. You were wanting God to use you without even knowing if you are his child. You are saying to God, “I don't know if the Cross was enough to forgive me. But please use me and then I will have assurance that you forgive me.” No. Your assurance of salvation doesn't belong in what you do or in any circumstances. Your assurance that you are saved belongs in the Cross.

When you have this assurance, you can now say to God, “Father, I am Your child because the Cross was enough to forgive me of all my sins. Now please use me, Your beloved child, for Your Kingdom.”

After spending chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews talking about the necessity to keep the faith, the author then spends much of the next seven chapters talking about the high priesthood of Christ.

Look at all that Jesus fulfilled for us. He is: our great high priest, He fulfilled the five types of sacrifices. His blood purges the sin out of us. But will you *believe* that He has done all this for you? You *must believe* these things in your heart for yourself for them to take effect. Hebrews 4:2 NKJV — ... but the word which they heard did not profit them, *not being mixed with faith* in those who heard it.

**** Finish.**

How great are we pardoned? Add verses.

Though our sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow.

End of revelation.

King David's murder.

Psalms 103.

After you believe Jesus, there will be a desire in you to live holy. If your mind begins to stray into sin, there is a small Voice in you that says you shouldn't be thinking this. If something is becoming an idol to you, that Voice will make you uneasy about it.

But take care that you don't harden yourself to that Voice. You can lose your sensitivity to sin if you do that.

Humbly submitting to the Holy Spirit is different from trying to keep the law. There is *love* when you are walking with the Lord. You *want* to love Him because you know that He so incredibly loves you. And there is no condemnation with Jesus. There is conviction, but not condemnation.

In all that I do, I ask, "Is this my flesh that is wanting me to do this, or the Holy Spirit?" A lot of activities are not sinful in themselves, but that doesn't mean that the Holy Spirit is telling you to do it.

Romans 5. Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.

Look at how much Paul reaffirms to the sinful Corinthians that they are children of God.

2 Corinthians 1:23-24 NKJV — Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are fellow workers for your joy; for by faith you stand.

Being sure of God's ever-present love for you is what allows you to take bold steps of faith. Your Heavenly Father has made a covenant of peace with you. He has sealed you with His Spirit. He has said, "I will never leave you. I will never forsake you."

Hebrews 13:6 NKJV — So we may boldly say:

"The LORD is my helper;

I will not fear.

What can man do to me?"

Isaiah 53 details the crucifixion that Jesus will have to do through because God is laying on Him the iniquity of us all. Because of the crucifixion, we will have peace with God. The next chapter, Isaiah 54, describes the great peace that will be ours. We will have peace with God and peace in our hearts. This is the greatest chapter in the Bible that I know of to describe how certainly we are set at peace with God. You should read the whole chapter (It is very good). Here is part of it. Isaiah 54:7-8 NKJV — “For a mere moment I have forsaken you,
But with great mercies I will gather you. With a little wrath I hid My face from you for a moment;
But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,”
Says the LORD, your Redeemer.
God had wrath in the old covenant. But He doesn't have wrath in the new covenant.

When I was younger, I would resist such teachings about Grace and love. I would say, “This isn't helping me. People will take advantage of this. And it doesn't tell me what to do. How do I live the Christian Life? How do I know what to do?” Looking back on that statement, I now hear fear, pride, religion, and human effort, which is the flesh.

Someone may say, “I'm just going to keep sinning because I am under grace.”

The law condemns, but God doesn't! Please don't confuse God's law with God's heart. God is just. But God is also love.

Do I believe once saved, always saved? No I don't. I have found too many warnings in Scripture about falling away to believe that it's not possible to fall away.

How about waking up every morning and saying, “Thank You Jesus that You loved me and forgave me of all my sins.” Don't these words cause joy, love, and gratitude to spring up within you?

Psalms 89:29-36 NKJV — His seed also I will make to endure forever,
And his throne as the days of heaven. “If his sons forsake My law
And do not walk in My judgments, If they break My statutes
And do not keep My commandments, Then I will punish their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless My lovingkindness I will not utterly take from him,
Nor allow My faithfulness to fail. My covenant I will not break,
Nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips. Once I have sworn by My holiness;
I will not lie to David: His seed shall endure forever,
And his throne as the sun before Me;
God will not, I repeat, will Not remove His lovingkindness from you.
The word lovingkindness is the word wehasdi. It is from the word chesed, and has a “with” conjunction attached.

This exact word is used five times in the Bible. Here are the four other verses. What is interesting is that all five of the uses occur when the new covenant is being explained.

2 Samuel 7:15 NKJV — “But My mercy shall not depart from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from before you.

1 Chronicles 17:13 NKJV — “I will be his Father, and he shall be My son; and I will not take My mercy away from him, as I took it from him who was before you.

Psalms 89:23-24 NKJV — I will beat down his foes before his face,

And plague those who hate him. “But My faithfulness and My mercy shall be with him,

And in My name his horn shall be exalted.

Isaiah 54:10 – (So have I sworn

That I would not be angry with you, nor rebuke you.)

For the mountains shall depart

And the hills be removed,

But My kindness shall not depart from you,

Nor shall My covenant of peace be removed,”

Says the LORD, who has mercy on you.

Consider the *strength* of the covenant. It is written in blood. And it is everlasting.

Hebrews 13:20 NKJV — Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

So don't ever think that your sins have caused Him to withdraw His love.

Forgiven.

In a world where everyone will look at your performance, your actions, your mistakes and where they will judge you, condemn you, and reject you based on what you've done, God does not work that way. God has already poured out all of His judgment, condemnation, and rejection on Jesus Christ. And you don't need to fear it any more. People may explode and have great wrath on you for your shortcomings, but our sins never make God stop loving us. Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath once and for all.

Isaiah 12:1 NKJV — And in that day you will say: “O LORD, I will praise You; Though You were angry with me, Your anger is turned away, and You comfort me.”

Your sins, past, present, and future, were all laid on Jesus on the Cross. If they weren't, then Jesus would have to come down and offer Himself again and again.

The veil is torn. You can enter the Holy of Holies and be in the very Presence of God. That is how great of an accomplishment the Cross was. It is the most important event in human history.

If you don't realize you are made righteous by the Cross, you will have a guilt conscience that is always trying to become righteous before God. You will be trying to enter into the Holiest by means of your works, which are filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). But the High Priest entered the Holiest by means of the blood of an animal. This represents the blood of Christ. Make your decision now to trust what that blood speaks over you. Then, your conscience will be washed from sin and you will have assurance that God hears you.

There may be someone who says, “I am going to call myself a sinner until I see every bit of sin removed from my life.” No. Learn this important principle:

Romans 4:17 NKJV — (as it is written, “I have made you a father of many nations”) in the presence of Him whom he believed—God, who gives life to the dead and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;

God calls things that do not even exist as though they already did exist. If God looks at you as being dead indeed to sin, then it is time for you to do that also.

Receiving the infinite love of Christ is so important that it is the key to overcoming many problems.

Worry. Matthew 6.

Fear of man. Identity.

Forgiving others.

Loving others.

Joy.

Confidence and identity.

Boldness and courage.

Depression, possibly. If the great King of Kings has total delight in me, if I am forgiven and perfectly loved, joy and hope will flood my soul. I don't want to make light of depression. But friends, this try should help. 1 Timothy 4:9-10.

Maybe you have blown in really badly. Jesus still does love you. Repent, confess it to God, and move on.

(It is relationship. His love will be made more real to you as you obey, know, and worship Him.)

(Move this.)

What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Is it merely a conscious decision to obey God in every area of your life?

Song of Songs. It is Christ and His bride expressing love *and adoration* for each other.

The church at Ephesus did everything right, but Jesus said, You have left your first love. So love is *more than obedience*.

In Revelation, we will have harps, singing love music to our King.

Those whom I phileo I rebuke and chasten. Be *zealous* therefore and repent. Part of loving Him means being *zealous* for Him. Phileo means "like". We ought not only to love but to *like* Jesus. Matthew 3:17 NKJV — And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

God didn't just *love* Jesus. He was *well-pleased* with Jesus. That word can also mean "delight." God delights in Jesus.

Proverbs 3:12 NKJV — For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the son in whom he delights.

If the Israelites had only believed God *delighted* in them, they would have taken the promised land.

Numbers 14:8 NKJV — "If the LORD delights in us, then He will bring us into this land and give it to us, 'a land which flows with milk and honey.'

More than just obeying, I think it means *to be in love* with God.

If you read David's adoration for God, it wasn't this formal, fearful thing where it is only reverence and respect. Of course that is part of it. But there is more.

God wants us *full* of Him, infatuated with Him. But to do this, you must not have any other loves. And you must be rid of fear, guilt, shame, and condemnation.

The Cross circumcises our heart to love Him. And it pays our condemnation so that guilt and shame won't keep us away.

I conclude that loving God with all your heart means *setting all your affections and desires* on Him too.

God hates covetousness. That is idolatry. God is a jealous God. He doesn't want you to *desire* anything of the world. That must mean that *He* wants to be the one and only one that you desire.

Do you see how vital it is to *know* the love of Christ? The biggest hindrance for many people is a sense of guilt because of the many sins they have done. Let me briefly encourage you with 1 John 2:2 NKJV — And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Your sins are paid for. The sins of the whole world were paid for by Jesus. He doesn't have to offer Himself again for any of your sins that you did after you became saved. If you have confessed and repented of your sins, He forgives you.

1 John 1:9 NKJV — If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Your job is to *believe* that Jesus is that good and merciful and that He forgives you.

God can forgive you of even very many sins, as long as you *believe Jesus*. (Add warning verses about falling away.)

Hebrews 7.

You must see how spotless you are in His sight. It's all by the blood of Christ, and not your works or your worthiness. You say, "I don't deserve the blood of Christ." I say, "That is why He is giving it to you. If you were good, you wouldn't need it. But now you see your sin. No amount of good behavior can pay for the wrath it deserves. Only the blood of Christ can pay for your sin. Take His blood. And take it often. As Jesus said, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you."

If you don't accept and rest in the forgiveness of sins that Christ freely offers you, then you will have trouble believing God to use you and come through for you. In your heart you will say, "God, I don't know if You still love me. But I have a need here. Please meet my need, and then I will know that You still love me." Maybe that prayer doesn't look so bad. But it is. You are tempting God. God's love is His essential quality, and you are not believing it. This does not glorify God, and He may choose to not answer your request. As for me, when I went through the worst struggle of my life, I prayed that way and just got worse. It was only after believing the book of Hebrews, and especially the High Priesthood of Christ, that my life turned around. I will explain more in the final chapter, which is my testimony.

Why would God do it this way where everything is by His grace and His power working in us? God is very jealous for His glory. If the Christian life is by Christ in us, He will receive the glory.

Paul went from murderer to apostle. Do you see how incredibly forgiven he was.

We tend to forget that God is exceedingly holy. In His exceedingly great holiness, He has perfect, yes, infinite, hatred for sin. If you commit even only one sin in your lifetime, then as far as God is concerned, you have become a transgressor of the law (James 2:11), and the righteous punishment for that is eternal judgment. It is very sobering to think about the eternal judgment that even just one sin will incur, but that is what sin deserves, and that is how much a holy God hates it.

The good news is that God is also love. Just as His hatred for sin is forever, so also His love for you will endure forever. Psalm 136 says 26 times (once every verse), "For His mercy endures forever." No matter how many your sins are, God's mercies are greater than the wrath they deserve. When Christ laid His life down, He bore the sins of the whole world.

1 John 2:2 NKJV — And He Himself is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Perhaps you have asked yourself, "How can God be love and at the same time not stop us from committing sins that eternally punish us?" Sometimes we let others learn by letting them make mistakes. But we would never let anyone make a mistake so large that they would be eternally punished for it. So why does God let us commit sins if we will be eternally punished for them?" Here is my answer: The God who didn't stop you from committing many sins is the same God who came to Earth to *pay the punishment* for every one of your many sins. *That* is how God remains love while letting you sin. That is the proof that God loves and cares for *you*.

The only way God can be love and permit us to commit sins that incur eternal judgment is if He also would come and pay the punishment for our sins.

"God hates the sin but loves the sinner." Yes.

That may sound unloving to many of you, that God didn't prevent Adam from bringing sin and judgment upon everyone.

Add a section, Free to love God, Able to love God.

Able to Love God with all the Heart

"I will be their God."

That is in the old testament and in the new. But I don't believe it ever happened in the old testament. Research this, and research the occurrences of that phrase.

Somewhere in here, say that the first of the ten commandments is

Exodus 20:3 NKJV — “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

And the second commandment is

Exodus 20:4-6 NKJV — “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

These two commandments show that God wants to be loved with all the heart.

(Copy to sermon).

Will you let him be your Lord in every sense of the word? Most of us have no clue of how much of our hearts and lives that are still not yielded to God. And we don't know the depths of worship that God wants to bring us to. If God truly conquered all your heart, mind, and soul, it might look like David dancing with a linen ephod, not at all worried about what his friends and family would say about him. David is so in love with God, he is dead to the opinions of man. Love for God has so dominated him that nothing in this world is going to take him away from that.

At another occasion, upon hearing that his son Absalom was dead,

If you read the Song of Solomon, you will find that it is filled with love language between the groom and the bride. Many scholars believe the Song of Solomon is really a metaphor of Christ's love for His Bride, the Church. Hudson Taylor, the missionary to China, wrote a book called Union and Communion to show how the Song of Solomon is a symbol of the church's relationship to Christ. In chapters 3 and 5 the bride gets careless and the groom departs for a time from her. The first time he departs, she goes searching for him and finds him without too much difficulty:

Song of Songs 3:4 - Scarcely had I passed by them, When I found the one I love. I held him and would not let him go ...

But she did not learn her lesson. In chapter 5, the groom comes knocking on her door when she is already comfortably in bed. She does not want to get up, and he departs again. This time, it is much more difficult to find him.

If you are serious about loving God all the way, if that is the driving force in your life, then you are not going to compromise with sin.

Luke 16:13 NKJV — “No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.”

Now look at the next two verses.

Luke 16:14-15 NKJV — Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves before

men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God.

What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength? Churches should be having this discussion. Jesus said it is the greatest commandment, so it must be important to God. It is also stated or alluded to 11 times in Deuteronomy, which is a lot. As for what I personally think it means, I do not think it is just a decision of the will that someone makes, although sometimes loving God all the way does require us to make a decision that will be difficult to follow. I think loving God all the way means being *in love*. Love includes your affections and desires. 1 Corinthians 13. Song of Solomon. Look at King David's love for God. I don't think it's humanly possible to love God with all our heart. God will help us to do this. We love God because He first loved us.

I also think loving God with our everything means that we *don't* allow our hearts to love anything besides God. This is where people may disagree. But if the most important commandment is to love God all the way, then, as I said before, churches ought to discuss what it means to love God with all our heart. If there are things in our hearts besides God, those things are idols. Look at how often the old testament mentions idolatry and speaks of God's hatred of it. (Include verses). It is clear, God always wanted a people that was zealous for Him, and for Him alone. This means it is God's will that He not share our heart with anything in this world.

And even if a verse does not mention the love of God with all of your heart, there are many verses that say that we should serve God with all of our heart or to obey God with all of our heart.

...

Jesus said

Matthew 22:40 KJV — On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

So if we can't fulfill these two, then we really aren't fulfilling the rest.

The great commandment is to love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength. One day, by accident, I discovered that the command to "love God" was in Deuteronomy eleven times. That's a lot. The following five verses include the command to love God "with all your heart": Deut 6:5. Deut 10:12. Deut 11:13. Deut 13:3. Deut 30:6. The next six verses include the command to love God, but without mentioning "with all your heart": Deut 7:9. Deut 11:1. Deut 11:22. Deut 19:9. Deut 30:16. Deut 30:20.

But I find Deut 30:6 to be the most interesting, which we will look at next.

(Maybe place the next several paragraphs in the section describing the law. Add a section called, what is in the law.)

Show verses of Jesus and Paul that coveting is idolatry and thus a failure to love God with all the heart.

Paul kept coveting in Romans 7. In other words, he kept failing to love *God* with all of his heart because his heart kept loving other things.

Moses prophesied a circumcision whereby we will be able to love God with all our heart. Later Paul said he did not covet.

Deuteronomy 30:5-6 NKJV — Then the LORD your God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it. He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers. And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

This describes Paul's problem. He could not love God with all of his heart because he kept coveting. He could not find a power within him to stop coveting. But thanks be to God. God prophesied through Moses that there was coming a day when He Himself will circumcise our heart through Jesus so that now we can love God with our everything and we can live without covetousness. But it is only by Jesus Christ and by him alone. You do not have it within you to defeat this sin. Only by receiving Christ in your heart will this sin and all sin go away. The circumcision that God will provide will cut the sin out of our hearts, and it will enable us to love God with all of our being.

Romans 2:28-29 KJV — For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

And how did Paul conquer his sin of coveting?

He ended Romans 7 by saying

Romans 7:24-25 NKJV — O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

Though he felt so guilty and condemned about his covetousness, he discovered that Jesus, far from judging him for his sin, actually loved him and was going to deliver him from his sin. He came to have “faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.”

You can't love God with all your heart if you are covetous. Try as he might, Paul was not able to defeat his coveting on his own. When he set all of his faith and hope in Jesus who loved him, *then* that desire went away. It was the Lord's doing. *Jesus* gave him a right heart. And we know Paul had victory over coveting because he was later able to say,

Acts 20:33 NKJV — “I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel.”

I imagine that even after Jesus cleansed him from coveting, the devil still tempted Paul to covet again, just as he tempts us to go back to old sins. But Paul might respond, “No. I will not let my heart be enticed with this or with anything in this world. Not again. I'm not going back there. Jesus loved me and washed me from that, and will I dishonor Him by returning to that sin? No. I can't do that to my Lord whom I love. Besides, Since I have tasted of His love for me, I know that this world has nothing to compare with it. What could this world offer me that would surpass the infinite love of the One who died for me when I was still a sinner? This world has nothing to offer me. As far as I'm concerned, I am crucified to the world, and the world to me.”

God always wanted us to love Him with our entire being, with all of our heart, soul, and strength (right three?). A lot of our problems are because we fail to even know that this is God's plan for us. But God also knew that this was not possible under the old covenant. Mankind is not able to love God with such perfect love. Again, many in the church have not come to this humbling place, where we see that we are deeply flawed in our very nature. We haven't seen that we are completely unable to keep the greatest commandment. Until "our uncircumcised hearts are humbled", we cannot say that we have died to our flesh, because we will still be turning to it! We need to come to the place where we say, "Jesus, I need You to live this life in me."

Add.

This doctrine of inheriting a sinful nature through Adam is very important to Christianity. It doesn't get spoken about enough. Why do you think God instituted circumcision? It was to show you that God's cure for sin isn't that we try to clean up ourselves. God's cure for sin is for you to be *cut off*, just as foreskin is cut off. People think that by trying to improve themselves, they can rid the sin out of their heart. I beg to differ on biblical grounds. The sin nature of mankind runs too deep for us to improve it. God loves us, and He provided a better solution: *Die to yourself*. When foreskin is cut off, it *dies*, and it cannot bother the person any longer. When *you* are cut off, so is your sin nature.

Romans 6:7 — For he who has died has been freed from sin.

In the old covenant, all the men were circumcised.

Leviticus 12:3 — And in the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised.

But in the new covenant, God doesn't ask us to be circumcised. He asks us to be *baptized*.

When a person is baptized, their whole body goes into a watery grave. Symbolically, that person (and everything connected with them) has died. It wasn't just part of the person that went under water to get cut off. Again, your old nature is not something you can "manage." Let go of *all of you*. If you are really serious about God, offer Him even the good things in your life that aren't sin. You cannot say you are fully surrendered or that you are fully dead to the flesh, if there are parts of you that you haven't given to God. Your entire identity changes when you go under the water because it all dies. When we go to a funeral, it is a very sad occasion because that individual no longer lives, and they are never coming back. That person's love, friendship, interests, personality, they are all totally gone.

But thankfully, God doesn't keep us under the water. The Holy Spirit enters us. *Life* comes back to us, and we rise out of that grave. Only this time, the life people see is no longer us. It's Christ! When Saul became a Christian, the Holy Spirit so changed him that *he changed his name from Saul to Paul*.

The apostle Peter was changed from a weakling to a bold person. His name was changed from Simon to Cephas. Cephas is Aramaic. It means "stone." The Greek word for "stone" is Petros, which in English we pronounce as Peter.

After Jesus was captured, Peter denied Him three times to save his skin. But after the Holy Spirit filled him in Pentecost, he was not the same. Peter and the apostles later gave great witness of Jesus to the Jewish council and were put in prison. Then they were *beaten*. How did they respond?

Acts 5:41 NKJV — So they departed from the presence of the council, *rejoicing* that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

They loved the Lord so much, and knew Him so deeply, that now, instead of fearing persecution, they rejoiced because of it. *That* is a great change.

John 1:42 — And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

James and John were called the sons of thunder.

Mark 3:17 — James the son of Zebedee and John the brother of James, to whom He gave the name Boanerges, that is, “Sons of Thunder”;
(But why?)

(Maybe take out).

This is what I feel is wrong with most churches. Their talk is very worldly. In my spirit I know something is very wrong.

Idol* is in the Bible about 150 times. It's a big deal.

It is the sin that determines if a king was good or evil.

King Jeroboam was the first king of Israel after they split from Judah. He introduced idolatry to the nation, and that became the downfall, not just of his kingship, but also of the nation. Of all the kings of Israel, only one is not described as He did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” It is King Jehu. Yet even he is regarded by many as an evil king. Why? He did not destroy the idol of the land, the statue that Jeroboam set up.

2 Kings 10:29 NKJV — However Jehu did not turn away from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who had made Israel sin, that is, from the golden calves that were at Bethel and Dan. Do you see how God longs to not be shared?

Add Rev 18?

Add Mark 12:28-34?

Mark 12:32-33 NKJV — So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. “And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.”

Ezekiel speaks more about idolatry than any other book in the Bible, research.

The first of the ten commandments is, “You shall have no gods before Me.” No idolatry.

The last of the ten commandments is, “You shall not covet.” And from Paul and Jesus, coveting is idolatry. So the first and last commandment are the same. “Do not have idols.”

Let me ask you an honest question: Do you *want* to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength?

You should. It is the greatest commandment. And besides that, it is the whole reason God will circumcise our hearts.

“And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

Genesis 17:9-11 NKJV — And God said to Abraham: “As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. “This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male child among you shall be circumcised; “and you shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you.

Xxx

Add passages circum* heart*

(Maybe take out)

There are two commands in the old testament to circumcise your heart (Deuteronomy 10:6 and Jeremiah 4:4). But nowhere does the old testament mention anyone that actually *did* have a circumcised heart. I believe that is a work of God.

Moses is prophesying that Israel will go into captivity in other nations. But from there, if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, then God will remember His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and will bring them back to the land. Moses uses the word “humbled”, not “circumcised.” I believe true circumcision of the heart is a work of God.

Leviticus 26:40-42 NKJV — ‘But if they confess their iniquity and the iniquity of their fathers, with their unfaithfulness in which they were unfaithful to Me, and that they also have walked contrary to Me, and that I also have walked contrary to them and have brought them into the land of their enemies;

if their uncircumcised hearts are humbled, and they accept their guilt— then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember;

I will remember the land.

And a few verses later,

Leviticus 26:45 NKJV — But for their sake I will remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, that I might be their God: I am the LORD.’”

So in Deuteronomy, the whole reason for the exile was so that afterwards God would circumcise them “to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

In Leviticus, the reason for the exile was so “that I might be their God.”

I believe these two reasons are the same. God wants to truly occupy His rightful place in our hearts, where He is loved with all the heart and where He truly is our God.

This is part of the new covenant.

Jeremiah 31:33 NKJV — “But this is the covenant that I will make ... I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Ezekiel 36:28 NKJV — “Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

Ezekiel 37:23 NKJV — “... Then they shall be My people, and I will be their God.”

Ezekiel 37:27 NKJV — “My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people.”

Friends, we have no idea, it has not been taught us in church, how God longs, how highly prized? it is for Him to occupy such a place in our lives where it can truly be said, “He is our God!”

God does not want to share us with another. But ever since the fall of Adam and Eve, He has not been able to achieve this. Now though, God has done something about it. Christ paid a great price to circumcise our hearts and to bring us into a new covenant. And it was All so that finally, we can now “love God with all our heart” and so that “He will be our God.”

Friends, how important is it *to you* to love God with all your heart and for Him to be your God? If God went to great lengths to make this possible, are you going to take Him up on this and begin loving Him all of the way? It wasn't possible for mankind with his sinful nature to love God with all the heart. But it is now. If we don't seek to love God with all the heart, we should, because He went to great lengths to make this possible.

Someone will say, “I will never be able to love God like that. And that discourages me because it means I am always falling short and always in sin.” I respond, “Remember how loved and forgiven you are. You are under a covenant of grace where you are accepted by God by faith through grace apart from works. So do not get discouraged. God sees you as whole, even in your shortcomings.”

Paul says

Philippians 3:3 NLT — For we who worship by the Spirit of God are the ones who are truly circumcised. We rely on what Christ Jesus has done for us. We put no confidence in human effort.

Believers in Jesus have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, which is the true circumcision.

The point of circumcision was that our heart may be circumcised. Why? “To love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.” God must really desire such love from us if He would institute the painful and permanent rite of circumcision upon *every male, throughout all their generations*

And He must really desire such love if He is willing to wait all the way to the time of Christ to make it to happen.

And He must really desire such love, if He was willing to allow His Son to die the most excruciating death of any man, for this to happen.

Circumcision was a symbol of what Christ would do for us on the Cross. God would circumcise you so that you would “love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.” Or, paraphrasing, Jesus died on the cross for you, so that you would “love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.” Did you ever think about that? Most people say that Jesus died to forgive their sins. And that is true, but that is not the only reason. God always wanted people to love Him with all of their heart, but it could never happen when humanity was spiritually dead in the old testament. So He sent Jesus to die to circumcise her heart, so that now we can finally love God with all of our heart.

A lawyer once asked Jesus, “What is the greatest commandment?”

“Jesus said to him, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ “This is the first and great commandment. Matthew 22:37-38 NKJV Isn't it interesting, the one commandment Jesus said is the greatest, is the one that God is going to such great lengths to achieve? I think that is profound.

Churches don't preach on the greatest commandment nearly enough. Maybe a lot of them aren't keeping it. Maybe our hearts have other things in them. But God is jealous to have all of our heart. He went to great lengths to have it.

Let us continue.

What God wants most is for us to love Him with all our heart, soul, and mind. This commandment was stated or referenced 6 times in Deuteronomy. But *when* will it be possible for mankind to love God with our everything? According to Deuteronomy 30:5-6, it will be possible when “The LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants.” Through faith in Christ, God circumcises our hearts.

Colossians 2:11-13 NKJV — In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses,

Now, at last, God has what He always wanted: a people who love Him with all their heart, soul, and mind.

It was impossible to keep the great commandment while humanity was under the law of Moses. Their hearts had not been circumcised. But now, Christ has cut a new covenant with us. Christ Himself has circumcised our hearts. If we will walk with Him and yield every part of our heart, soul, and being to Him, we can now love God with all of our hearts.

Your flesh is not going to be able to love God with its everything. You can't keep this commandment on your own. You can try and try, but fallen man can't keep it. But if you *die* to all of the old man, and if the Holy Spirit fills you by faith in Jesus, *now* there is a power in you to love God with all your heart.

Romans 7:24-25 NKJV — O wretched man that deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! ...

We see in the verse above that Paul found victory over sin through Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:19 NKJV — We love Him because He first loved us.

And there it is again. We are *able* to love God because He first loved us by sending Jesus to be the payment for our sins.

1 John 5:3-5 NKJV — For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

And there it is again. How are we able to love God and keep His commandments? Only one born of the Holy Spirit will be able to love God all the way. And how does one become born again? By faith in Jesus. So as with Paul, John writes that *believing Jesus* is the way to overcome sin and the way to love God.

Finally, how does John end his letter? Of all the many ways he could end it, he writes,
1 John 5:21 NKJV — Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Why would he pick that for a final thought? I believe John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, was concerned that his readers would be led astray by idols from doing that which matters most to God, which is to love Him with all the heart.

God, who is love, always wanted us to love Him with all of our hearts. This makes idolatry a great offense to God. They were never able to conquer that sin in the old testament. God hated it so much that He allowed Israel and Judah to be destroyed for it. God is jealous for all our honor and love to go upon Him. But in order to love God to this degree, we have to become dead to ourselves and to our desires. And the only way this is possible is to be circumcised with the circumcision of Jesus Christ. Colossians 2 says that when we were baptized, we were buried with Him. We died with Him. And now having died to the flesh, we can now begin to love God with all of our hearts. That is what Deuteronomy 30:5-6 says. Their hearts will be circumcised “to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” We cannot love the Lord with all our hearts as long as our sinful nature remains. Christ had to come and perform a spiritual circumcision so that now, if we will yield, we will love the Lord with all our hearts.

After the frightful giving of the 10 commandments on Mount Sinai, the people feared to hear the Lord speak anymore. They went to Moses and asked that he might listen to God for them, lest they die.

God was pleased with the fear they showed before Him. I think we catch a glimpse of God's desire to be feared with what He says to Moses.

Deuteronomy 5:28-29 NKJV — ... “I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. They are right in all that they have spoken. Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!”

For a time, they did fear the Lord. But it did not last. Servile fear can motivate us for a time to stay away from sin. But it does not address our deep need. We must be born again of the Holy Spirit.

To love God with all the heart, mind, and soul. What does this look like if a person were to keep it? I tend to think it would look like this:

This person is in love with God, obsessed with God, is only about God's business and God's desires. They always worship God, always remain humble before Him, and are always in communion with Him.

This American self-centered culture makes it difficult to do this. And with our fallen, sinful nature, it would be totally impossible to do, unless we have the Holy Spirit dwelling in our hearts and we always yield to Him.

1 Timothy 1:5 NKJV — Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith,
A pure heart - Don't allow any idols in your heart.

A good conscience - Don't do something that will give you a bad conscience.

A sincere faith - Have a heart that receives God's love and that believes Jesus forgives you of all sin.

We preach all these messages. But loving God is not a skill or talent that you can learn it in your head. It's not something that you can just decide one day that you are going to "do." You can decide to "do" other good works. But to love God with all the heart requires more than a decision on your part.

Your heart needs to be circumcised with the circumcision of Christ. I believe God *plants* love in you for Him.

1 Timothy 1:14 NKJV — And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.

It looks like Paul is saying that the Lord gave to Paul great grace, faith, and love for Christ.

The struggle with sin in Romans 7 will happen to anyone who turn to the law and their efforts to defeat sin. Such people neglect that Jesus loves them, that He paid for all of their sin, that He keeps them by grace in a covenant of everlasting peace, and that He will strengthen them by cleansing their hearts by His Spirit so that He gives them the desire and strength to say No to sin.

Galatians 6:14 NKJV — But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.

The love and grace that Paul found in Christ were so great that he lost all concern for the world. His eyes now are on the Lord Jesus who loved him and died for him. The concerns, cares, riches, and pleasures of this world are all dead as far as Paul is concerned, so great, so infinite the love of Christ is to him. Christ's love isn't just a *little* better than what the world offers. It is *infinitely* better, stronger, and more meaningful than what the world offers.

He not only is So worthy of having all of our love. But He also Greatly desires to have all of our love.

Do you see this? Look at what the scribe said here. Jesus said that the scribe answered wisely, which means that what the scribe said is true. This passage ought to be more well known than it is, because it is a summary of the Bible: God longs first of all for us to love Him with all of our heart. And He wants us to love our neighbor also.

Mark 12:32-34 NKJV — So the scribe said to Him, "Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. "And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." But after that no one dared question Him.

Part of the new covenant is that we will live God with all our hearts.

But will we always love Him so much? Are there steps we need to take for our hearts to be so transformed? Are there Christians in the new testament who didn't love God all the way and Paul wrote the reason why? Research.

Deuteronomy 19:9 NKJV — “and if you keep all these commandments and do them, which I command you today, to love the LORD your God and to walk always in His ways, then you shall add three more cities for yourself besides these three,
I think this happened. Research.

Someone will ask, “If baptism is so powerful, why don't I see a change?”

The first thing to do is Believe. God sends the Holy Spirit when we believe the gospel of His Son.

Galatians 3:5 — Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Romans 6 verse 9 says that we know Christ was raised from the dead. Verse 11 tells us to reckon (to count, consider) ourselves also to be dead to sin but alive to God. We were in Christ, dying and rising again the third day. Our job is to believe, to reckon that to be true.

The second thing to do is Yield. We become born again by faith. This will give you a new nature that you must yield to. Baptism means nothing if you don't intend to surrender.

Romans 6:13 — Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

(Maybe remove.)

Disobedience is such an offense to God that Adam's disobedience caused the Earth to be cursed. Clearly God wants all our honor and love to go upon Him. But in order to love God to this degree, we have to become dead to ourselves and to our desires. And the only way this is possible is to be circumcised with the circumcision of Jesus Christ. Colossians 2 says that when we were baptized, we were buried with Him. We died with Him. And now having died to the flesh, we can now begin to love God with all of our hearts.

In the old testament, the concern of the people was to keep the law of Moses. But in the new testament, our concern now is to *love Jesus*. We are to set our affections on Him and not anything in the world. We are to know Him, worship Him, draw near to Him, humble ourselves before Him, trust Him, and live every moment for Him. We should be so consumed with Jesus that we can say, “To live is Christ (Phl 1:21)” and “Christ is our life (Col 3:4)”.

Add to book.

There is a spectrum of behaviors that mankind is capable of attaining to. On one extreme is the carnal flesh with its obvious sins. On the other extreme is strict religion where things look perfect outwardly. With human effort, you can control what part of the spectrum you want to be at. God wants us to leave, not only the sins of the flesh, but also the religion of the flesh. God wants us *off the spectrum of behavior*, and to walk instead *by the Spirit*. You may find people

that are very religious but they seem to lack closeness with Jesus, and they don't seem to be like Him. Mankind is unable to leave the spectrum of sin and religion and to enter into walking by the Spirit. But God provided a way. And that way is *Faith in Christ*. You Must enter into what He has done for you by having full assurance that it applies to you personally. This is what Romans 8 is about.

The new covenant as described in Jeremiah and Ezekiel describes what God will do to solve the problem of their idolatry. Why is God concerned so much with idolatry? Could it be that the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart and idols take away love that is meant for God?

Look at what God said to Moses He would do when they return from their exile.

Deuteronomy 30:6 NKJV — “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.”

Do you see how zealous God is for us to love Him with all our heart?

In summary, consider the following. And after each one of these, ask yourself, “Is God trying to tell us that He longs for us to love Him with all our heart?”

- The command to love God is in the book of Deuteronomy 12 times.
- The very first of the ten commandments is to have no other gods before the Lord, because they would take away our love for Him.
- The greatest commandment according to Jesus is to love the Lord your God with all the heart, soul, mind, and strength.
- The new covenant
- God's final word to Moses
- Idolatry, which stops us from loving God with all the heart, is so offensive to God that He exiled His people for seventy years for repeatedly engaging in it.

Christ lives the Christian life in us

Peter had preached the crowds before because Jesus had sent his disciples into different cities to preach and to heal the sick. But in none of those times did it say that Peter was filled with the Spirit.

On Pentecost, however, we read that the apostles, including Peter, were “all filled with the Holy Spirit.” And we see a far greater result from his preaching on Pentecost, than we did from his preaching before he was filled with the Spirit on Pentecost. 3000 souls were added to the church that day.

I told a young man at church one time "You are a great Christian." He said "It's Jesus in me, bro." He is right! That's exactly what I am trying to say. The joy and the love of this young brother did not come from himself. He wasn't taught them. Love and joy are *fruit* of the Holy Spirit. God raised Jesus up from the dead and now He comes to live in my heart. It's not me being religious or doing good works. Jesus Himself lives in me and does those good things. Every religion out there is a work that man does. But with a true Christian, that man does nothing. The living, resurrected Jesus himself dwells in that person and does the good works. The only thing that man does is believe.

If you don't get this right, you will get bogged down in religion, and you won't even know it. You will say "The Bible says, you should do this and this and you should avoid that and that." True, the Bible does say that. But the Bible also says in many places that we no longer live under the law but by the Holy Spirit. We died to the old covenant of the law, so that we can live under the new covenant of the Holy Spirit.

Look at this great summary here.

Galatians 4:3-6 KJV — Even so we, when we were children (in the time from Moses to Jesus), were in bondage under the elements of the world (trying to keep a set of rules by human effort): But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law (and deliver them from trying to keep it), that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. (And now the Spirit dwells in us and causes us to serve the living *God*, not a set of rules.)

Here is another really great summary.

Romans 7:5-6 NKJV — For when we were in the flesh (under the law of Moses), the sinful passions which were aroused by the law (Rom 5:20) were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.

Here is another great summary.

Romans 8:3-4 NLT — The law of Moses was unable to save us because of the weakness of our sinful nature. So God did what the law could not do. He sent his own Son in a body like the bodies we sinners have. And in that body God declared an end to sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He did this so that the just requirement of the law would be fully satisfied for us, who no longer follow our sinful nature but instead follow the Spirit.

And another great summary.

Colossians 2:6-7 KJV — As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.

You received the gospel of Jesus Christ. He is your only Source of true spiritual life. The only way to walk the Christian life is to walk it *in Him*, being close with Him, abiding in Him, being rooted in Him and built up in Him. Be assured that He loves and forgives you, and you won't be able to help but be thankful for His love.

And again,

Colossians 3:3-5 NKJV — For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

The gospel message is that you, with all your sins that you could not be rid of, died with Christ on the Cross. Jesus defeated sin on the Cross because when He died, you died, and your sins with you. Praise be to God! You will be thankful to God if you really believe this. Friend, you are supposed to be *so sure* of your death to sin when Christ died, that any time you see sin raising its ugly head in your life, you recognize it as something that no longer belongs. It no longer has *anything* to do with you. It is an intruder that is not part of your house, not part of your family, not part of your identity, and is not at all welcome to stay. With such assurance, “put to death, mortify, crucify, any sinful desires of they resist their head.” This is more than being disciplined. Faith isn't required to be disciplined. Any unbeliever can discipline themselves. In total identification with the death and resurrection of Jesus we are told to believe that we *already are* dead to sin. *And therefore* we kill it, because we have nothing to do with it.

What Jesus says to Nicodemus in John 3 is instructive. Given what we have seen about how God will redeem mankind, I will read this passage, with my own commentary added.

John 3:5-10 KJV — Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God (because humans have been spiritually dead since the time of Adam and Eve). That which is born of the flesh is flesh (every human born after Adam has a fleshly, sinful nature); and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (The Holy Spirit will make alive your human spirit). Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again (the prophecies about the new covenant tell us that God will make us born again). The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof (you can discern when a sound is the wind), but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth (because God does not show you that): so is every one that is born of the Spirit (you can discern His Voice, but you don't have the full picture because God hasn't shown it to you). Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be (why haven't I heard this doctrine before)? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

What does Jesus mean when He says “You are a master in Israel, and you don't know these things?” Isn't Jesus saying, “Nicodemus, you are a master of the old testament. Don't you see the whole message of the Old Testament? God gave Moses the law that they tried to follow for 1400 years. But how did that work out? Israel and Judah were both destroyed because they did not keep the law. It was a failure. God has to do something for humanity besides giving them a set of commandments written on stone. And on top of that, Moses and the prophets all spoke of a future day when God would truly circumcise people in their heart. He would make them alive by the Holy Spirit, and then people would truly obey God.” Nicodemus did not understand that this was the message of the old testament. Many people in church today also do not see that this is the message of the old testament.

It appeared as though Nicodemus was living a righteous life. He was sincere. He has repented of his sins. He did what was right. Yet all of his righteousness counted for nothing. It was human

righteousness. It didn't come from his innermost being. It didn't come from a new nature. Yes, he disciplined himself. But that is not the same as being born of the Spirit. A person born of the Spirit will have a righteousness in their lives that *did not originate from themselves*. It originated from God. Such people can say that God transformed them. God will receive glory because He is the one that brought about the person's change.

Or look at Cornelius. *Even he* needed to be born again.

Acts 10:2 NKJV — a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always.

When I first read through the Bible, I eventually read the book of Jeremiah, the longest book of the Bible. He lived during the reigns of the final kings of Judah. If you go to the last chapter of his book, you read about the downfall and destruction of Jerusalem by Babylon. That's how it all ends. But in the middle of the book, (chapters 31-34) you read small sections of a *new* covenant that God will make with His people. And in this new covenant, God will write His laws on our hearts and will cause us to keep His commandments. In other words, we will become born again. Jeremiah is not a book about principles of righteous living. No. Jeremiah shows us that the human condition is such that *God* needs to change our hearts. And He will do that when He makes a new covenant with us.

Some say, Modern Israel isn't committing idolatry like they did in Bible times. What do you make of that, Matthew?"

I respond, "Neither were they committing idolatry in Jesus' day. But Jesus tells them they still need to be born again. They are just as much dead in trespasses and sins today as they were in the Bible. And in a way they *were* committing idolatry. They were covetous and greedy, and the Bible calls that idolatry because their heart is set in something besides God."

John 6:63 NKJV — "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.

Galatians 2:19 NKJV — "For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God."

That is profound. But that is the point of this book. I used to think that living for God meant that I try to keep the law and the ten commandments. But that is because I never heard this message that I am bringing you. If you put yourself under the law or any system of performance, then it is "you" who is trying to live the Christian life. But if you believe that Christ's work on the Cross was enough to make you accepted by God, then you will be thankful. God will honor your faith, and His Spirit will begin to produce good fruit in your life. Only then are you truly living for God because only by Christ working in you can your spirit live for God. "You" need to be crucified, so that your spirit, which becomes one with God's Spirit, can live the Christian life. Paul summarizes that thought in the next verse.

Galatians 2:20 NKJV — "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

It is vital for you to believe Jesus completely loved you and forgave you by His death. It is how Paul lived the Christian life. Or, rather, it is how Christ lived His Christian life inside Paul. That is why I have included a whole chapter about this (provision of the new covenant). This important truth is also what I needed to believe when I was at the lowest point in my life. The final chapter (my testimony) will describe this. All I will say for now is, my life just got worse and worse until I chose to believe that Jesus does love me and forgive me.

God wants a love relationship with you, but that can only happen if you believe He loves you.

Hebrews 7:19 KJV — For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

If three quarters of the Bible is to show us the futility of the law to transform us, there is a very big lesson there.

Even in the old testament, God prophesied about a killing of the old man. That is what circumcision is. I learned recently from a friend that if a man is not circumcised, then that part of his body can become very dirty. God's remedy isn't to clean that part of a man. It's to cut it off.

Deuteronomy 30:1-6 is such a great summary. It's a wonder to me why these verses are not more well known.

Galatians 5:19-21 describes the works of the flesh, and it isn't pretty. That list describes the raw, unchecked, undisciplined human nature, and isn't going to change anytime soon.

Galatians 5:19-21 KJV — Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

The flesh Cannot be improved.

Romans 8:7 CSB — The mindset of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit to God's law. Indeed, it is unable to do so.

Nowhere in the Bible does it say that we should sanctify our flesh.

We have a member in our church named Mike Denigan who says "My spirit got saved, but my flesh didn't." That is correct. Our spirit will be re-born, but our flesh won't. The temptations of the flesh will still come to you, but if you keep yourself abiding in Christ, then those things don't have a part of your spirit, and it is much easier to say no to them.

"Lord" is in the New Testament 622 times, 103 of them are in Acts. Almost all cases of "Lord" refer to Jesus. "Savior" is in the New Testament only 24 times, 2 of which are in Acts. Clearly they placed a large emphasis on Jesus being our Lord.

Many of us are tempted to say “Look how many souls Paul converted to the Lord.” But Paul was consistent to make sure everyone knew that it was Not himself that did the work, but God. Here is one such example.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 NKJV — Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers through whom you believed, as the Lord gave to each one? I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase.

That is the point of this book, to get you to realize, Christ's kingdom expands, not by your works and efforts, but by your intimacy and obedience to Christ.

Though I be nothing.

Matthew 16 on this rock.

Acts ministered to the Lord.

(Maybe move or take out.)

Lamentations 2:14 NKJV — Your prophets have seen for you

False and deceptive visions;

They have not uncovered your iniquity,

To bring back your captives,

But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions.

Colossians 3:17 NKJV — And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Colossians 3:23 NKJV — And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,

(Copy to sermon.)

This is supposed to be the beginning of an intimacy, a relationship so deep it would sustain them. There is communication here. 1 Corinthians 14.

Acts 1:4-5 — And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.

Acts 1:8 — But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

What if the church has mistakenly turned the Holy Spirit into a doctrine? What if Jesus was right that it was good for Him to go to Heaven, so He could send the Holy Spirit to us? What if it's our closeness to God through the Holy Spirit that will sustain us in times of persecution?

Ephesians 2:18 KJV — For through him we both have access (and relationship) by one Spirit unto the Father.

What if the Holy Spirit is a *person* who lives, speaks, and empowers? What if we need to have communion with Him?

2 Corinthians 13:14 KJV — The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.

Acts 11:22-23 KJV — Then tidings of these things came unto the ears of the church which was in Jerusalem: and they sent forth Barnabas, that he should go as far as Antioch. Who, when he came, and had seen the grace of God, was glad, and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.

There are a million different things Barnabas could have exhorted them to do: love one another, stay away from sin, give, go to church, etc. But he picked the one that really matters. Do you remember the 7 “I Am” statements of Jesus? *We* are not those things. *Only Christ* is those seven things. So if there is going to be any spiritual life that comes from us, it will have to be *Him* in us. And that will only happen if we do what Barnabas said and “with purpose of heart cleave unto the Lord.”

The seven “I am” statements in John tell us something of who Jesus is to be to us.

- I am the bread of life: (John 6:35, 41, 48, 51). He is manna from Heaven that we feed on every day. We should come to Him often for spiritual nourishment.
- I am the light of the world: (John 8:12; 9:5). All of us are in spiritual darkness. And we are clueless about the meaning of life and the direction to take our lives in
- I am the door: (John 10:7). If you want true spiritual riches and if you want to go to Heaven, you must go through Jesus.
- I am the good shepherd: (John 10:11, 14). Jesus loved the world all the way and died for its sins.
- I am the resurrection and the life: (John 11:25). Jesus will resurrect us at the end of the world. And He will resurrect our dead spirits the moment we first believe on Him.
- I am the way the truth and the life: (John 14:6). He is the way because no man comes to the Father but by the sacrifice of Jesus. He is the Truth because every word He speaks is from God. He is the Life because the only truly satisfying life is one spent for Him. (Maybe change).
- I am the true vine: (John 15:1, 5). We need to keep a close intimacy with Him at every moment because “apart from Me, you can do nothing”, which is to say, nothing that is spiritually good.

With *Jesus* wanting to be so much, yes, *everything*, to us, it leaves no turning to ourselves. Jesus wants to be everything for us, not only for our sake, but because He wants a close relationship with us, which can only happen if we keep turning to Him. *We* get blessed because He feeds us spiritually. And *He* gets blessed because we will love Him more, the more we abide in Him.

But will you turn to Jesus to be these things to you. He won't force Himself on anyone. He wants your love to be from freedom, not compulsion.

Let me share a verse that is a little mysterious.

Romans 8:5 NKJV — For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

There was an Evangelist named Philip who brought many people in Samaria to faith in Jesus. The apostles heard about this, and they sent Peter and John to them. What did Peter and John do in Samaria? Did they teach about good, holy Christian living? Did they preach Christian morals and virtues? Let's read.

Acts 8:14-16 NKJV — Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Three chapters later a similar thing happened. Some disciples went to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus to them. The apostles heard this and they sent Barnabas to Antioch.

Acts 11:22-23 NKJV — Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

Don't get me wrong. Having good morals and loving your neighbor are *included* in a life that walks close with Jesus. But virtues and righteous living are not *the main focus* of a soul who walks close with Jesus. The next passage illustrates this.

Paul traveled to Jerusalem to share the gospel he preached with the apostles. He wanted to make sure he was preaching the same message that the other apostles were. The apostles certified his message, but they felt he forgot to mention to take care of the poor. The interesting thing is, that taking care of the poor *was already in his heart*.

Galatians 2:9-10 NKJV — and when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that had been given to me, they gave me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship, that we should go to the Gentiles and they to the circumcised. They desired only that we should remember the poor, the very thing which I also was eager to do.

No one needed to teach Paul that he should take care of the poor. When you set your heart to know and love Jesus, He will give you His desires, and His desires *include* caring for the poor, and all other good virtues. (Remember the new covenant? “No more shall they teach their neighbor ... for they shall all know Me.” That's what we see in Paul. No one had to teach him because he knew Christ deeply through the Holy Spirit.)

Zzz

(May or may not take out)

Why did Jesus come? Similar to why the old testament? Why circumcision? Look at the last line. That we “Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.”

Luke 1:67-75 NKJV — Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel,
For He has visited and redeemed His people, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of His servant David, As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets,
Who have been since the world began, That we should be saved from our enemies
And from the hand of all who hate us, To perform the mercy promised to our fathers
And to remember His holy covenant, The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: To grant
us that we,
Being delivered from the hand of our enemies,
Might serve Him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life.

(Maybe take out).

Isaiah 29:13 NKJV — Therefore the Lord said:

“Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths

And honor Me with their lips,

But have removed their hearts far from Me,

And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men,

Xxx

The disciples all forsook Jesus. And they were debating about which of them would be the greatest. Jesus had taught many times about humility, but it had not changed them.

Xxx

About speaking in tongues,

The emperor said to Martin Luther, “God would not have let His church be in error for a thousand years. Therefore I reject you.”

But God did let His church be in error for a thousand years. The church has largely been in error here too.

1 Corinthians 14:4 NKJV — He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

Would God allow only the church in the apostle's day to have this ability to edify themselves?

1 Corinthians 14:39 NKJV — Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

Look at David Wilkerson. He was a young, Pentecostal, Assemblies of God preacher in Pennsylvania. But he knew there was more to the Christian life than what he was living. He took a bold step and literally threw out his television so he could devote more time to prayer. God laid on his heart to reach out to the drug addicts and gangsters in New York City. He drove there on many weekends, sleeping in his car. Although it took a while, many of the gangsters started coming to Christ. David knew that they needed a Christian environment where they could get off the drugs, so he opened a house for them. That was the beginning of Teen Challenge, an organization that has since spread to hundreds of cities, helping many thousands of people to be delivered from drugs by the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. David wrote the book, The Cross and the Switchblade, to share the story of how God brought it to pass. I've read it, and I recommend it. What is noteworthy is the success rate of those who go through Teen Challenge. (Find and compare to govt)

Speaking of David Wilkerson, he wrote a book about the new covenant, called *It Is Finished* (remove?). He preached a series of messages on the New Covenant. He strongly believed that this covenant has the power to deliver from sin. Before he died, he said, "This will be the revelation that the end-time church needs. The world will become so sinful they will need this covenant."

Joel 2:28-32 NKJV — "And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh;
Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
Your old men shall dream dreams,
Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants
I will pour out My Spirit in those days. "And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth:
Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass
That whoever calls on the name of the LORD
Shall be saved.
For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance,
As the LORD has said,
Among the remnant whom the LORD calls.

Acts 2:37-39 NKJV — Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. "For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

You say, "But I *have* the Holy Spirit." I respond, "We are talking here of the *baptism* of the Holy Spirit." Jesus had told them in the previous chapter that

Acts 1:4-5 NKJV — And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which," He said, "you have heard from Me; "for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

This is your inheritance! The supernatural is for you! When the Holy Spirit came on someone in the old testament, something happened. Often they prophesied.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart." This means that I must be dead to everything else. Dead to my desires, dead to the lust of the eyes, dead to the pleasures of the world. Before Christ, we were powerless to cut these things off, but now that He has circumcised us, there is a way to die to these so that we might love God alone with all our heart.

God gives them the law, knowing full well, they won't be able to keep it. Ever since Adam and Eve ate the fruit, mankind has been dead in trespasses and sins. But God needs to get mankind to a place of seeing that. So He gives them 10 commandments.

Consider that most of the New testament books begin by describing what Christ has accomplished for us. Only after that does it get practical.

Everything in the New Covenant is by faith. In the Old Covenant, the law of Moses, everything was by works. "*You must do this. You must not do that.*"

Galatians 3:2 KJV — This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

God gave Derek Prince a revelation that Jesus took Barabas' place on the Cross. Yet we all know that Jesus took *our* place on the Cross. God said to Derek, "That must mean that you are Barabas." Barabas was a murderer. Paul said in Romans 7, "I know that in me dwells no good thing." Most Christians have not come to the realization yet.

Romans 7 is deep. Very deep. There are two ways to be transformed. One is by effort, by rules, and by willpower. That is the way of the old covenant. People assume they are capable of cutting sin out of their lives. Now, yes, you can decide to "behave" yourself. Yes, you can become a Pharisee and clean the outside. And to an extent, you can repent and change your mind toward sin. But you can Never become completely clean on the inside apart from the blood of Christ washing the sin out of you.

Look, the commandment came to Paul, "Do not covet." And he noticed that he had every kind of covetous desire. You can't love God with all of your heart if you are coveting the things of the world at the same time. Paul may have mastered the other nine commandments but this last commandment, the tenth commandment beat him. In the second half of chapter 7 he struggled. Oh how he struggled to keep that commandment.

And may I say, the problem in the church today is we do not even recognize that it is a sin to set your heart on the things of the world. The church of today would say to Paul, "What's wrong if you want this or that thing? Those things aren't a sin. Don't feel bad, Paul. You're a human. Everybody wants to have things." They would try to comfort Paul in his covetous desires. No, those things are not a sin in themselves. But *coveting them* is a sin because you aren't loving God with all your heart. Ephesians 5:5 says covetousness is idolatry. Or worse, some in the church would even say, "God *Wants* you to have these things, Paul. God exists to satisfy your desires. You just need to name it and claim it!" I believe that is abomination, but I see that attitude more times than I want to in the church. Friends if you have idols in your heart, no wonder church is boring. You aren't in love with God. You can't be in love with your husband or wife if there is another lover in your life. Our problem is, rather than ask God to take our desires away, we ask God to fulfill them.

Anyway, Paul came to the end of himself. He realized his flesh was always going to be flesh. He needs a power outside of himself if he is going to defeat covetousness. The church has not come to that place yet. They don't realize how short they come of God's holiness, and so they don't see that they are incapable of living up to it. And that causes them not to see their utter need for abiding in Christ at every moment.

What? You can't keep the 10th commandment? Try harder, Paul! Find yourself some messages on coveting. What? You've tried that and you still struggle with coveting?

Eventually, through Christ, Paul was able to say this.

Acts 20:33 NKJV — "I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel."

He defeated covetousness, but it was Christ in him.

Xxx

Copy all the times that coveting is used in NT. It is a worse sin than we think.

Romans 1:21-32 describes the fallen, depraved state of the unrestrained human condition. For anyone who objects saying "I am better than those people," Paul writes

Romans 2:1 NKJV — Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. And,

Romans 3:9 NKJV — What then? Are we better than they? Not at all. For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.

Romans 2:29 — But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.

"Circumcision is that in the spirit." Ever since Adam and Eve, our spirits have been "dead" in trespasses and sins. But now Jesus performs a circumcision in our spirit so that finally we can love God with all of our heart. And if someone loves God with all their heart, then the only praise they will be concerned about receiving "is not of men, but of (from) God."

Someone will say "I think Christians have the best religion." To which I say, "No. It's not a religion. It is Jesus Himself living in us. I, myself, and all my attempts at religion, were crucified with Christ. I no longer live, but Christ lives in me."

Jesus also, when He walked on this world, confessed "By Myself I can do nothing." (see John 5:19 and John 5:30.) And He said "Without Me, you can do nothing."

Jesus' last words were "It is finished." Our reconciliation to God is finished. We need to live in that. There is a danger that when we listen to messages on many different topics, without noticing, we begin thinking "No, it is Not finished. I still need to do this, this, and this." And then, without realizing it, you take it on yourself to improve yourself, thinking you become more and more acceptable to God as you do so.

Friends, that is religion, not Christianity. Christ's finished work on the Cross has made you fully accepted by God. If you preach about how to be a better Christian, the audience needs to understand it in context of the finished work of the Cross. Now, if there are big sins in your life, then yes, you do need to repent and cut those things out. But for a believer in Christ who isn't committing big sins, we grow by becoming closer to Christ.

I'm serious about this. Most preaching you hear is about what "you" need to do. And probably the message is correct in showing an aspect of the Christian life that is supposed to be better. The problem is, it leaves people saying "Good message. What else do I need to do? Then tell me more, and more of things I need to do." I feel like saying with Jesus "This is the work of God, that you *believe* in Him whom He sent." Believe His infinite love for you. Believe He forgives you. Believe that His blood has made you whiter than snow in the sight of God. Believe Him to be your all in all. Get to know Him deeply. He made a way for that to be possible. "But if I don't have all this teaching, how will I know how to live a Christian life?" Friend, I say again, It is *not you* that lives the Christian life. Your job is to believe, and *He* will bear good fruit of love and joy in you, and He will live the Christian life in you.

I believe many of us would not know how to respond to Jesus if we saw Him today. "Jesus? The one who wants me to try harder, and do more, and avoid these things and do these things? The one who will judge me, and if I'm good enough I will get into Heaven?"

What a horrible view of Jesus. How about saying "Jesus, the one who loves me and gave Himself for my sins, who wants to walk this life with me and who wants me to know and love Him."

After Adam and Eve sinned, we *couldn't* love God with all of our heart. We were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins. And there was a thick veil separating us from God. We were commanded to love a God who we could not even know. But with the circumcision of Christ, now we can. We can be consumed with God, living only for Him. We are restored to communion directly with Him. The veil has been torn. God Himself now dwells in the human heart. We can personally Know the Living God, which was impossible before Jesus died and rose again.

Yes, when we are saved, we are spiritually circumcised. But to what point? *So that we can love God with all of our heart.* Now this won't become automatic. This world will throw all of its pleasures at you to prevent you from loving God all the way. Yet, since you are circumcised, it will *be possible* for you to love God all the way. But you will have to take stock of what you love, desire, want, think about.

Remember God loves you. He loved you before you even came to Him. And He loves you so much that He took all your condemnation away so you can be restored to Him without shame, guilt, or fear. Let that motivate you to love Him back. (In fact, when you believe God loves you, He will supply the Spirit Who will *help you* to love Him back.)

Romans 8 makes about 8 references to living either by the flesh or by the Spirit. It is either you, with your best efforts doing the Christian life, or the Spirit. You are not the Spirit. Before Jesus rose from the dead, they could only serve God with their flesh. That is how they served God in the old covenant. But that is not how God wants for us to serve Him in the new covenant.

The same thing with the beginning of Galatians 3:1-5. In these 5 verses, there are three references to either live by the flesh and law, or to live by faith and the Spirit. You are living by either one or the other. I try to always operate out of faith in the love of Christ. But I often find myself trying to meet a performance, which places me in the flesh.

Galatians 3:5 KJV — He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

After the coming of the Holy Spirit, let's see what difference it made.

Acts 2:44-47 NKJV — Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Or this,

Acts 4:32-35 NKJV — Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need.

You don't see such love and generosity in the old testament. Some of them were loving, but as a whole, God's people in the old testament were not as loving as in the new.

Romans 5:19 KJV — For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners ...

No one needs to be taught to be selfish. Children are selfish by nature. We inherit a still nature by Adam.

Romans 11:32 KJV — For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.

Sometimes I wonder, Why did God not stop Adam and Eve from eating the forbidden fruit? I don't have the full answer. But I can say, God wanted to demonstrate to every human being His incredible mercies in paying for all of our sins. Will you receive His mercy by faith? Paul called himself the worst of sinners. And the next thing he said was

1 Timothy 1:16 NLT — But God had mercy on me so that Christ Jesus could use me as a prime example of his great patience with even the worst sinners. Then others will realize that they, too, can believe in him and receive eternal life.

God loves us so much that He won't ask us to improve ourselves. He will do that for us. Our job is to believe.

The New Testament church saw rapid growth. How did they do that? They did not have a Bible, They did have the Holy Spirit. They were taught to know the Lord Jesus.

Pg 91. Yan Venter says that the baptism in the Holy Spirit should be the beginning of a long lasting relationship that would make an excellent witness out of you.

This isn't a book of lessons that you are reading. No. This book points you to the One whose *presence* in your life will transform you.

Cleddie preached a Friday night message around 2017 on foundational forgiveness. Yes, that is the foundation of the new covenant. If it wasn't, we would be back under works, under law, under fear.

Romans 8:15 KJV — For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.

The old Covenant already had commands to love God with all your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself. But in the New Covenant, God gives us the Holy Spirit and now love is a fruit of the Spirit. Yes, we are still commanded to love God and to love people. But if you are a Christian, you ought to find that God is already working these things in your heart. So now, instead of forcing yourself to love someone, all you need to do is yield to that desire in your heart that God has placed there.

1 Corinthians 3:5-7 KJV — Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

I listen to Heidi Baker messages and she says the same thing. She has planted thousands of churches in Mozambique. But she will say, It's not her. It is the Lord that does it. I listened to a Kathryn Kuhlman message where she said the same thing. "Kathryn doesn't do the miracles. I had nothing to do with it. I am a spectator that watches what the Holy Spirit is doing. I end the meetings refreshed in the Lord, rather than exhausted, because it was never me doing any of it to begin with."

Add a section in this chapter about the necessity of *prayer*. The apostles prayed. If you aren't doing it with your wife, you should pray. Prayer is worship and fellowship with our Lord.

Xxx

Add end of Romans 8. There is a love that Paul discovered that is beyond anything this world offers. A love that never quits, never stops, never accuses, never judges. It is vital. It is foundational. Gal 2:20. End of Ephesians 3. Yan book.

The end of Romans 8 is the end of his theology of the first seven chapters. The conclusion of the matter is the infinite love of Christ.

John 6:28-29 NKJV — Then they said to Him, "What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

The problem with churches these days is if you ask them, What must I do to work the works of God, they will attempt to answer it by giving a list of things for you to do and avoid. Friends, that has been tried before. That is the old Covenant. Yes, we want every moment of Our lives to be

submitted to God. But that doesn't happen by adding more rules. It happens by the last verse of Peter's last epistle.

2 Peter 3:18 NKJV — but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory both now and forever. Amen.

Paul forsook his great intellect and his best religious system, for Christ!

There is still a place for repentance.

The word repent in Greek is *metanoia*. Meta means change, like metamorphosis. Repent means a change of mind. John the Baptist baptized people with a baptism of repentance. They changed their mind regarding their sin. But they had not been born again yet.

John 3:34 NKJV — “For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

God gave the Spirit *without measure* upon Jesus. That tells me everything Jesus did was by the Holy Spirit. Friends, that is how God would want *us* to live our lives.

Derek Prince. Building Christian Character 4246.

Romans 6 vs 6 says "knowing" and vs 11 says "reckon." We know the historical Scriptural fact, your old man Was crucified when Jesus died. How do you apply it? You reckon it true. If you died, you don't sin. Do you have the faith to say "Because my old man was with Christ and Christ died, my old man is dead"? You either take that remedy or you go on struggling with your problem. The solution is to yield our members to God. Christ is our sanctification. You still use your will. You don't will to keep a set of rules. You will to yield to Jesus. That is the key. In a certain sense, the hardest thing is not trusting yourself. If you were like me the moment you are confronted with a problem you think of ways to solve it. But we are supposed to yield to Jesus. The secret to being holy is yielding to Jesus in you. It's not always easy. It's not effort, it's union. It's not struggling, it's yielding. It's not works, it's faith.

2 Timothy 2:20-21 NKJV — But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.

1 Corinthians 5:7 NKJV — Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us.

The blessing of Abraham is the Promise of the Holy Spirit.

Galatians 3:14 NKJV — that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

And in the next passage also, He is called the Holy Spirit of promise. And not only that, but He is also called the guarantee of our inheritance (Heaven).

Ephesians 1:13-14 NKJV — In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of

promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

If the Holy Spirit is both the blessing of Abraham and the guarantee of our inheritance, we must be sure to never neglect Him.

I want to share with you now, what I think is a great discovery.

How did the apostles live the Christian life in the book of Acts? Was it all by the Holy Spirit, or We read many times in Acts from chapter 2 through chapter 13, that the disciples were "full" of the Holy Spirit, or "filled" with the Holy Spirit. But, this stops being reported after Acts 13:52. Yet the apostles show no signs of doing fewer miracles after this verse. Why does the author no more mention being filled with the Spirit? Were the apostles left to themselves after this? Did God now expect them to try their hardest, rely totally on their intellect, and create the best sermons? No. I believe it is because in this final time, the author uses a unique word for "filled." It is the imperfect tense. It means continual or repeated action. The disciples *are* still repeatedly being filled with the Spirit. But it just isn't being repeated again and again because this final time encompasses the rest. Perhaps Luke had already written enough time that the disciples were filled with the Spirit. He thinks the readers get the picture now. So he uses a form of the word "filled" that means a repeated or continual action. Only the NASB has it right.

Acts 13:52 NASB20 — And the disciples were continually filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit. The only exception to this is the following

Acts 19:6 KJV — And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

But in this case, those disciples had not yet received their initial filling with the Holy Spirit. The initial filling with the Spirit is different from subsequent fillings with the Spirit because it is also the first time that gifts of tongues and prophecies are given to them. This was not one of the "repeated fillings" of the Spirit that Acts 13:52 talks about. I still maintain that after Acts 13:52, the apostles did receive many more fillings with the Spirit, but they were all incorporated in that one unique word meaning "repeatedly, continually filled."

So be encouraged. We might not *read* after Acts 13 that the disciples were filled with the Spirit. But that does not mean that they were on their own, using the best of human intellect to preach and do great works. When we read after Acts 13 about the great preaching or miracles done by the apostles, it was still the Holy Spirit working through them. Isn't that great? God's way for us to live the Christian life isn't by efforts or rules. That was the old covenant. God's way for us to live the Christian life is to be continually filled with the Holy Spirit.

Consult a Greek scholar about the word filled in Acts 13.

Xxx

With Jesus also the Spirit remained on Him.

With David also, at Samuel's Anointing.

The twelve disciples of Christ spent three years with Him, listening to His teaching and learning from Him. But was the greatest apostle to be found in any of these twelve? No. Paul was the

greatest apostle, but he was the only one who had *not* spent three years living with Jesus. That is worth thinking about. Jesus said

John 16:7 NKJV — “Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you.

The life of Paul bears witness to the fact that it was to his advantage that Christ went away to Heaven. If Christ had not ascended to Heaven, then He would not have poured out the Holy Spirit upon Paul. God's grace upon him was so great that he changed his name from Saul to Paul. If the Holy Spirit lives the life of Christ in us, and if we yield to the Spirit, then we realize it wasn't Paul who was the greatest apostle. It was Christ *in* Paul.

All that head knowledge of being with Christ for three years. Certainly they would be great apostles after spending three years with Christ, right? But where did that get them? At the end of the three years, they all forsook Christ, and Peter denied Him. Teaching isn't the answer. If I may be so bold, this is where churches (I believe) get it wrong. They think "If you just teach people to live right, they will do it." If humans were computers that are always storing more and more data, then teaching might be the key. But we are body, soul, and spirit. "Teaching" goes to your mind, which is your body. A lot of us feel 'stuck' spiritually. Did you see the word "spiritually" in the previous sentence? Yes, it is your spirit, not your mind, that is stuck. And maybe some teaching is okay to have. But teaching won't make you to endure persecution. There needs to be something much deeper. Christ laid down His life *by the Holy Spirit* (Hebrews 9:14). If our hearts, souls and minds are surrendered, if we are yielded to God, if we are one spirit with Christ, we can also endure.

After Jesus appeared to Paul on the road to Damascus, he was blinded. He could not see, nor did he eat or even drink for three days. He was praying. He was getting to know his Lord in a very deep, intimate way. He was paying the price. Now, when people were saved at Peter's preaching in Acts 2, “They continued in the apostle’s doctrine and fellowship.” And perhaps if you have no background in church or the Bible, you may need teaching on right and wrong, and the basics of Christianity. But the real Christian life is lived in deep fellowship with the Lord, not by recalling hundreds of teachings you've received over the years. The Jews live by teachings. Christians live by knowing our Lord. This is the new covenant.

Jeremiah 31:34 KJV — And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.

Paul made it clear in many of his writings that it wasn't him, but God's *grace* upon him that worked mightily.

Add these references.

Search grace, power, Spirit.

(Maybe take out).

Matthew 11:11 NKJV — “Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”

What did Jesus mean by this? Jesus says “among those born of women.” I believe Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus is very helpful here.

John 3:4-6 NKJV — Nicodemus said to Him, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”

So when Jesus says, “among those born of women” I think He is contrasting them with those born of the Spirit.

Matthew 11:13 NKJV — “For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

The Kingdom had not started yet because Jesus had not come and rose again. Those who are born again by the Spirit have something that even John the Baptist did not have and are thus greater than him. Yet if you look at most Christians today, you will think that John the Baptist was greater. Christians are living by the flesh, and so the Power within them, that is greater than John the Baptist, is not allowed to flourish.

Yet the next verse is also hard to interpret.

Matthew 11:12 NKJV — “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.”

Luke 17:21 NKJV — “nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Notice that Jesus repeatedly used the word “Kingdom.” This is the same word used in Isaiah and Ezekiel to tell about the new covenant. Jeremiah says that God will raise David to sit on His throne (as king).

Do you see how much Jesus is supposed to be your king? In a kingdom, the king has all authority. Friend, have you surrendered all of your life to the authority of King Jesus? All of it? He died to pay for all of your sins. I believe we have no idea how worthy He is to have authority over every part of our lives.

Jesus is the Lord our righteousness. This is in Jeremiah and Isaiah 54.

But in the old covenant,

Deuteronomy 6:25 KJV — And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.

No, *you* don't live this Christian life. You can't. It is too high for you. But Thanks be to God. He loves you. And as you grow to know Jesus, trust Him, and yield to Him, He will live it in you by the Holy Spirit. And *He* will get the glory.

I want to say again that God wants to own all of your heart. I don't want to leave the impression that now that you believe, you can take it easy and act on any desire that comes your way. No! Be disciplined to not let your heart be given to anything in the world. I suggest cutting stuff out of your life that captivates you or takes your time.

Mark 4:18-19 KJV — And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.

God still loves the Christians choked with the thorns. I think they are still saved and kept by grace. But you can't know God deeply when you set your affections on the things of the world.

He loves you, and He wants *nothing* to get in the way of your love and fellowship with Him. It all must be *faith!* Faith in His love.

Is everything you do done *in love with the Lord*? If not, then it is religion.

There is a *humbling* of ourselves before God that we must do. "I know that in my flesh dwells no good thing." My friend, anything in your life apart from the Holy Spirit is flesh. There may be things in your life that are not sinful in themselves. Even all of these need to be offered to the Lord so that the will of the Holy Spirit will be done in these areas.

Union with Christ. The eleven Not's of Jesus. His total union and dependency on the Father. "You don't live this life" means you must die to the flesh, which means dying both to religion, but also to the world. Matthew 13. Those desires are not the Holy Spirit. They are the flesh! This is a high price to pay. This American culture makes it especially difficult.

To be honest, I hear Zero preaching about this parable of Jesus. And no wonder. People may leave church if you tell them God wants them to surrender their pleasures, riches, and concerns. And many pastors have no intentions themselves of giving up these things. Perhaps you *can* build a large church by not preaching on uncomfortable passages. But we are after fruit *of the Spirit*, not a large number of people in the building. Pruning hurts, but if you endure it, it will yield greater and better fruit than you even knew about.

If you are worried about losing members when you suggest that the way forward means to forsake the world, then consider what it was that drew people in Acts. *When people saw the miraculous*, they were drawn to the church.

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 KJV — And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

You say "I can't do the miraculous." That's right. In fact, you can't do *any* of the Christian life. Christ does it all from beginning to end, including the miraculous. You need to have a deep fellowship with Him. He must become your Lord. He won't compete with other loves in your life. And when love for Him has consumed every part of your being, He will be intimate with you and will share more with you, and you will see the miraculous.

Surrender your pleasures, riches and concerns.

Matthew 13 has seven parables of Jesus in it. The parable of the four types of soil is one of the parables. To emphasize that He expects your total surrender, He gives two other parables with that message:

Here are two others.

Matthew 13:44 KJV — Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

And,

Matthew 13:45-46 KJV — Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

So, three of the seven parables make the point that the Kingdom of Heaven will cost you everything.

Now, salvation is a free gift given by faith.

Paul the Apostles went about “Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” Acts 20:21.

But to see the Kingdom greatly at work in your life will cost you everything.

To love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is to set all of your love upon Him. It means there is no part of you that doesn't love God, and that there is no time in the day where you don't love God. Love has many definitions. We set our affections on God. We don't let our heart be enticed with *anything* but God. “Wow, *this* is awesome!” Something has grabbed your heart at that point and you don't fully love God.

In the old covenant, if a man did anything wrong, the law cursed him. And then he needed to make a sacrifice.

But when Jesus offered up His life, it was once for all time. All our curses were laid upon Him. And therefore we remain at peace with God. The law cannot curse us. Jesus already took that for us.

Now that religion is done, that leaves us free to focus on knowing the Lord personally.

John 17:3 NKJV — “And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

Knowing Jesus deeply was Paul's longing.

Philippians 3:8 NKJV — Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ

And two verses later,

Philippians 3:10 NKJV — that I may know Him and the power of His resurrection ...

Your union with Christ is the key to *His Life* flowing into you and into this world. Don't let anything hinder your union with Him. If your union is intact, *Life* will be there, *His Life*. You will have a joy, a love, an assurance in you that did not come from yourself.

John 4:14 KJV — But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

Friends, Christianity isn't lessons, lessons, lessons. No! When His well of life springs out of you, people will see Christ in you. It is His very Presence in you and not a bunch of lessons you learned on how to behave yourself.

If you are trying to live your life by a bunch of lessons you learned, that has been tried before. The law of Moses was a large set of lessons on how to behave yourself. It failed to change the heart. But God said that in the New Covenant, "They shall no more teach every man his brother and neighbor saying Know the Lord. For they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest." The new covenant is about knowing the Lord, and He will change you as you get to know Him.

You might think "There is a contradiction here. You say 'you are not able to stop your sins' but then you say 'you must die to all that is in the world.' How can I die to the world if I'm not able to stop my sins?"

Again, God did the work in you. But now your job is to *yield*. Isn't there already a hunger in you to have a close walk with Jesus, to be consecrated to Him, to be able to hear His voice, to have His word for people, and to see great signs and what happen through you? Isn't there already a tugging in you to draw away from the world and into a place of deep fellowship with the Master? How about yielding to that desire and get alone with Him? And then it will be said of *you*

Acts 4:13 KJV — Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.

We want the world to say "These Christians have been with Jesus." It can happen, if your union with Him goes that deep.

We think

(Jesus in us) + (our best efforts) = victory.

But you will take some of the glory if this is how it works.

Galatians 6:14 KJV — But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

God will Not share His glory with another (Isaiah 42 and 48).

A lot of us feel *obligated* to add our own efforts to God. And others of us were *taught* that God wants our human efforts. In either case, we are like Abraham, trying to fulfill God's promises. And we produce an Ishmael that looks great, but who came about by man's effort apart from God. And then when God says about Sarah "And I will bless her and also give you a son by her", we respond "Oh, that Ishmael might live before You!" In other words "I've spent the past eleven years trying to raise this boy hoping he would inherit the promises. And now You won't even acknowledge him? Oh, that You would make Ishmael to inherit the promises. Otherwise I have spent the past eleven years in vain."

God doesn't need your efforts. On top of this, remember that it is not even possible for you to help God because "the flesh counts for nothing."

We read of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23. And all of us want that fruit to be produced in our lives. It can happen. But these nine fruits are called "fruit of the Spirit" and not "works of

the flesh.” They come only from the Holy Spirit, from God, and not any human striving. If you try to help God and add “works of the flesh,” you ruin it because your flesh only has a sinful nature described in Galatians 5:19-21. If good fruit is to be produced in your life, it has to all be God. At this point many people may be saying “This is too good to be true. I am a sinner. And you’re telling me that God wants to do this great work in me, and He doesn’t need or even want my help with it? He’s going to do it all for free?” Yes. Yes He will. He loves you *that much*. He will bear the fruit in you. “Does this mean I can live doing whatever I feel like, and God will still bear the fruit of the Spirit in me?” No.

Galatians 5:17 NIV — For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Religious flesh (like Abraham trying to help God by producing Ishmael) and sinful flesh (Galatians 5:19-21) are both flesh.

Adam

It's *All God*.

Now, yes, you should *yield* to God’s working in you. But there is no amount of effort that you can *add* to His Spirit.

Philippians 2:12-13 KJV — Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Love is a command. But love is also a fruit. What? How can this be? Love is produced in you but you have to yield to it.

Remember all the prophecies about a coming King and Messiah. Jesus does not lay down rules and regulations for us. No! He wants something far more intimate. He wants to have such a close up with you that at every moment you will love Him and yield to Him. He loves you, and now He wants you to love Him. That is far better than keeping a set of rules.

If you read Revelations chapters 2 and 3, Jesus addresses seven different churches individually. To two churches, He has only good things to say. To three churches, He had a mixture of good and bad to say. To two other churches, He had mostly bad things to say. But I want you to see something. At the end of addressing every one of these seven churches, Jesus says “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” So the Holy Spirit was speaking to all seven churches. But not all of them were discerning and obeying the Spirit. Jesus corrected the churches on their need to love Him and to discipline those committing fornication. He told one church they were dead, though they had a name that they were alive, and He told another church they were lukewarm, though they thought they were rich. I imagine that even before hearing Jesus’ words to them, these churches had already felt a small tugging in them to repent in these areas, but they didn’t discern that this tugging was the Holy Spirit. I believe the Spirit tugs at our hearts, but we often dismiss it because it doesn’t line up with what we have been taught by our family, or church, or culture. I look back in my life and see times where I felt a prompting, but I missed it, because I said “That’s too bold. No one in church is doing that. So I

must be in the wrong for wanting to do (whatever I felt prompted to do)." There are times I wish I had given money to an individual, or had spoken up, or had not been on the computer so long. In fact, even writing this book is something I pushed aside for a long time. But a friend of mine, after hearing me discuss the Bible, said I should write a sermon. I started, but it grew so long it became this book you are reading.

Where does that leave us? Worship Jesus. Keep your eyes on Him. He is your only hope of being sanctified. Pray in the Spirit. Paul spoke in tongues more than anyone else. Keep yourselves in the love of God. And don't turn to the flesh. Say no to its pleasures, its worries, its lusts. Everything must be submitted to God. But also deny the flesh in its attempts at earning God's forgiveness and its attempts to become holy through doing good works. God's forgiveness is by His grace, and sanctification is by the Holy Spirit. This leaves nothing for *you* to do, but to know the Lord, exalt Him, be thankful to Him, and yield to Him.

1 John 5:4-5 KJV — For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

Derek Prince.

"Actually for most professing Christians, law or a set of rules is like a crutch. They limp around supporting themselves on the crutch. God says throw the crutch away and trust Me. And we say "but what do I do without the crutch?" I mean I have discovered that it frightens people to trust God's grace. We won't want to hang on to a little set of rules that we keep. That's our crutch, it doesn't work."

"God's way of righteousness and holiness is not struggling, but yielding. Come to the end of your efforts and say, 'Holy Spirit, Take over. I can't handle this situation, but You can.' It doesn't mean you don't need willpower. What it means is you've got to use your willpower differently. You got to use your willpower to try to Not do it yourself. Now I'm a very independent strong-minded person. My natural instinct is anytime I have a problem I'll think of the solution. It's taken me years to come to the place where I don't do that. I say "Lord what is your solution?" And very often it's very different from anything I would ever thought of. The Christian life is Not a life of struggle. It's a life of yielding to the Holy Spirit within us."

"It's not effort, but union. Remember Romans 7. If you are married to your flesh nature, you'll bring forth works of the flesh. You can struggle as much as you like, but this is a biological law. But, if through the Holy Spirit, you are united with Christ, you will bring forth fruits of the Spirit."

It's all supposed to be the Holy Spirit now. When you get circumcised, that foreskin it's completely cut off. The flesh gets cut off and dies. You are flesh. You are supposed to get cut off and die. When you go under a baptism, your flesh dies. All of you dies. When you rise up out of the water, it is the Holy Spirit in you rising up, and He will now live this life in you. Romans 8 makes a great distinction between flesh and Spirit. Before you were saved, you did not have the Holy Spirit. You were entirely flesh. Now that the Spirit lives in you, all of your life is supposed to be yielded to Him, and none to the flesh.

Do I believe that you will reach a point in this life where you will actually attain the perfection and holiness of Christ? No. James writes.

James 3:2 NKJV — For we all stumble in many things. If anyone does not stumble in word, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body.

And even Paul the apostle writes

Philippians 3:12-14 NKJV — Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

2 people with great faith.

Look at the HONOR they displayed before Jesus:

1. [Luk 7:6-8 KJV] Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldest enter under my roof: Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth [it].
 - I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof.
 - Neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee.
 - Say in a word, and my servant SHALL be healed (he won't even question the certainty, the truth, and the authority of even one word of Christ to perform a miracle)
 - I also am under authority (of God), as You are, Jesus. And therefore, those under me obey me, as everything obeys when You command.
2. [Mat 15:22, 25-27 KJV] And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, [thou] Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. ... Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast [it] to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.
 - O Lord
 - Son of David
 - She came and worshipped Him "Lord, help me"
 - Truth Lord (You speak truth. And You are Lord).
 - Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their MASTERS' table (You are allowed to spare a few miracles to the gentiles and still be faithful to your goal. Spare me one miracle).

I have all these lessons and documents. But what really matters is whether I am obeying Jesus, what matters is my own relationship with Him. Is He truly my Lord in every area of my life? If I am not fully trusting Him, loving Him, and obeying Him, then I can't go any further with the Lord,

until I surrender that area. You can learn all the lessons you want. You can hear all the sermons you want. But it will only do you little good. Your Lord and Master, King Jesus, wants to have all of your heart, your affections. He does not want your heart going to anything else besides Him. That is why so many of us are not making spiritual progress. There are areas where He is not fully your Lord. You don't feel His Life in you. You don't see the fruit coming out of your life that you want. There could be many things that are taking your heart away from Him. If you are bitter at something, if you harbor thoughts of lust, of anger, of pride, if you are greedy, or if you set your heart on any of the vast entertainment in this world, or a host of other things, then there is something you need to surrender to Him.

He loves you. He knows you have a sinful flesh to contend with. He will be faithful to keep you. His love for you isn't going anywhere. But He is waiting for you to yield everything. I'm not talking about keeping a rule. I'm talking about obeying the small Voice inside of you that points out an area where you have not loved your Lord all of the way. You didn't have this feeling before you became a Christian. But you do now.

1 John 2:20 KJV — But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

Surrender every area, and even surrender every moment, walking by faith.

It could be, as the case for me, that we need to surrender to His love and to His grace. If we don't do that, we will walk in the strength of the flesh, and we will fail to love Him all the way.

To all seven churches in Revelations 2-3, Jesus says, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." You are supposed to be able to hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches. You didn't have that ear before you became a Christian. It's not rules. Jesus loves you. Will you love Him back ... by obeying Him?

Add the prayer lives of the men of God. They all prayed at least three hours a day.

Being led by the Spirit often involves risk. Often there is a danger that you will be wrong or appear foolish to people.

And,

Philippians 2:12-13

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

And don't think that God expects you to turn your brain off and wait for every single direction and word to say.

Nehemiah 5:7 NKJV — After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, "Each of you is exacting usury from his brother." So I called a great assembly against them.

Luke 18:1 NKJV — Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart,

Acts 6:4 — "but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word."

Paul and Silas were not ashamed to be heard praying and singing.

Acts 16:25 — But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

Ephesians 6:18 — praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints—

The early church prayed. They saw their need for Jesus to help them, to strengthen them, the guide to them, to empower them. They humbled themselves before the great King of Kings. I think that the modern Church understands very little about this. We have all of our “how to” messages. But if you understand Jesus is the Source of all life, and He has all power, you will be consumed with humbling yourself before Him, knowing Him on a deep level, worshiping Him, and walking this life with Him.

“Come to our next service and you will learn how to do this or that.” But if “I” learn this or that, then I don’t need Jesus or to keep my eyes on Him. I will be self-sufficient and able to do this or that all by myself, without any help from Jesus.

(Maybe remove).

Isaiah 30:21 NKJV — Your ears shall hear a word behind you, saying, “This is the way, walk in it,” Whenever you turn to the right hand Or whenever you turn to the left.

(Maybe remove).

Isaiah 26:19 NKJV — Your dead shall live;
Together with my dead body they shall arise.
Awake and sing, you who dwell in dust;
For your dew is like the dew of herbs,
And the earth shall cast out the dead.

What was the message of the apostles?

Acts 5:42 — And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ.

You say, “we already know that Jesus is the Christ. Why do they keep preaching that?”

Because God wants to bring you into a greater and greater revelation of that.

Look how important it was for Peter to get it.

Matthew 16:16-19 NKJV — Simon Peter answered and said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus answered and said to him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. “And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. “And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

How do you walk the Christian life? Your flesh will not understand it.

John 3:8 The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.”

The Holy Spirit does not live in your mind. Your brain is not able to understand the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit lives in your heart and prompts you there.

Interestingly, the word translated “wind” is actually the same word as “Spirit”. Almost all translations use “wind” here, except for the Young's Literal Translation. What is also interesting,

is the word “wind” occurs 38? times in the New Testament, and this verse is the only time where it is *not* the Greek word “anemos”.

Acts 28:13 and 27:13 and Luke 12:55 notou. Acts 27:40 pneousa. Acts 2:2 pnoas.

In other words, if John was trying to use the word “wind”, he would likely have used anemos because that is the word for wind that is used *everywhere* else in the New Testament.

And also interestingly, the word for “sound” in this verse is translated the vast majority of times as the word “voice”. So for these reasons, I believe the Young's Literal Translation is the most accurate.

John 3:8 YLT — the Spirit where he willeth doth blow, and his voice thou dost hear, but thou hast not known whence he cometh, and whither he goeth; thus is every one who hath been born of the Spirit.'

But, there is John 3:12. What is earthly things? Is it the wind? In that case, wind means wind and Young's is wrong.

But see Meyer's NT commentary on this verse.

1 Corinthians 2.

This will require faith. You have to let go. You will not know what will happen when you obey the Spirit.

How do you hear the Spirit?

Regardless of whether the word for wind means “Spirit”, Jesus said, “You cannot tell where it comes from.” I have heard from a number of people, including a few times for myself, that a sudden thought came to them out of nowhere. It did not come from themselves, they can testify. And that is how they knew it was the Spirit prompting them. They knew that this thought in your mind did not originate from themselves. So they trusted that God put it there.

Of course, this is risky. You cannot always discern if a thought came from yourself or from the Spirit. And you may get it wrong sometimes, but that is OK. Your heavenly father knows that you were trying to obey him, and he will not leave you alone, even if you are wrong.

Will you abide in Him?

You certainly won't find the resources to live the Christian life in yourself.

Don't stray to the flesh. Keep your closeness to Jesus.

Fullness of faith. I believe Christ to be my everything. He is my Healer, Deliverer, Great High Priest, Ultimate Sacrifice, Friend, Brother, Master, Savior, and Lord. He is my King who Loved me All of the way and died for me! He Is my all in all, and none of it is left to me. To Him be the glory forever! Oh worship and glorify Him forever!

Hopefully after reading this book, the book of Romans will make a lot more sense, especially the first 8 chapters. Paul presents a lot of doctrine in those chapters. It is highly important because if he were to only present practical teaching on good Christian conduct, he would be presenting religion. He would be presenting things that you need to do to be a better person. But as we have seen in this book, Christianity is not a religion. It is not at all about what you can do. You aren't able to live the Christian life. Christ has to do it inside of you by the Holy Spirit. This is the doctrine Paul presents in the first 8 chapters. Your job is to believe Jesus loves you and died for

all of your sins, giving you continual peace with God. And you must always abide in Him, yield to His power in you, do what you believe He is saying, keep your eyes on Him, and seek to know Him deeper. Notice how each one of those involves Jesus. In that way, it will be Christ who lives the Christian life in you. And thus, He will get all the glory for it. The church gives Him glory, not just because it is good to give Him glory, but because He is the one who is doing it all. And so He has earned the glory. "He has done it." To Him be the glory forever!

My Testimony

I've heard it said that when you are at your lowest, life can only get better. But that was not true for me. I took yet another turn for the worse.

"You pride yourself on your abilities? I'll take that away with gagging to debilitate you.
You pride yourself on your great mind? This gagging will make you feel that you don't have a sound mind.
You pride yourself with your health? I'll take that away by giving you disease.
You pride yourself with your righteousness? I'll take that away through your sinful thoughts."
I don't know if God would say such things. But everything that I had trusted to for identity, for my righteousness, and for my security apart from Christ, was taken away.
I was a sick, sinful, proud, debilitated man. And yet Christ loved me. His Blood is all I need.
Don't listen to any Voice besides what His Blood speaks over me.

- I had frequent headaches.
- The headaches were very intense.
- Muscles were twitching all over my body.
- I had involuntary jerking movements.
- My muscles were shaking when I used them.
- I was hyperreflexive, with even a raindrop making me jump.
- I had trouble getting sleep.
- When I could sleep, I had disturbing dreams.
- My gagging was very frequent.
- I was troubled with how much pride was in me.
- I woke up telling God I want nothing to do with Him.
- For about 3 days I could not stop having blasphemous thoughts.

Now, look at all the right things that I was doing:

- Going to church every Sunday
- Going to work every day
- Not watching filthy things on the internet
- Not cussing
- Not smoking
- Not drinking
- Not watching TV
- Not doing anything that could be considered entertainment
- Listening to the Bible
- Giving money
- Going to small group
- Praying tons and tons that my health improves and trying to believe that God will heal me
- ~~Believing God loves me and forgives me~~

I wasn't watching TV or playing games or doing anything that could be considered selfish or idolatry. Yet my life was getting worse every day.

I was so sure that I had either sinned too far with my unbelief, or that I had some sin in my life that I was unaware of. "Surely, if I am living a holy life, I will be healed from disease." But I got worse.

Look at the first page of this book. "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." That was how Paul lived his life. But every day, my health declined, and with it, my faith that Jesus loved me and forgave my sins. The foundation of the Christian life (faith that Jesus loves you) was deteriorating every day as I looked at my health as a sign of whether Jesus loved me. I ought to have looked at the Cross as the sign that Jesus loved me and paid for my sins, but I didn't.

I was doing so many things right, except that I didn't really believe Jesus loved and forgave me. And even though all the rest of my life may have been correct, this one area of unbelief was so wrong that God did not want to heal me until it was dealt with. You say, "God didn't heal you *over that*?" No, He did not. Jesus paid a tremendous price on the Cross to forgive me. And I neglected it. I had doubt about it.

I couldn't stop blaspheming. I didn't want to, but my mind just repeated it again and again. I was going to despair and give up the last trace of hope for forgiveness.

Romans 5:20 NKJV — Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more,

I was so full of fear. But the more that fear entered my life, the worse my life became. God was not going to honor all the fear in me. But the worse my life became, the more I became fearful, as it looked even more that God had not forgiven my sins. And so I was in a horrible spiral of believing I'm not forgiven, which caused bad things to happen, which made me more convinced I'm not forgiven, which made more bad things to happen.

The book of Hebrews does not say who it is addressed to. But we do have a clue who it is for in this passage.

Hebrews 10:32-38

But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated; for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise:

“For yet a little while,

And He who is coming will come and will not tarry.

Now the just shall live by faith;

But if anyone draws back,

My soul has no pleasure in him.”

Hebrews was written to the persecuted church. Of all people in danger of falling away from the faith, persecuted Christians are at the top. They need the assurance that Jesus loves them and is interceding for them and has not abandoned them for their sins. With other people, as with me, the dark and hopeless-looking circumstances of life are what convinces them that their sins are too many. God has forsaken them.

Continue.

After her word that morning, I made the decision to agree with the book of Hebrews and believe that Jesus was still my great High Priest, that He still loved me, and was interceding for me. And then, a great thing happened. For the first time in a long time, I was not afraid to die. Before this, I was terrified of the thought of dying because I was pretty sure that I was going to be condemned. There are many people in this world that are in the same state of dread that I was in. They have a heavy weight on them because they expect

Forgiven.

1 John 3:1 NIV — See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

Heidi Baker and John KunKun quoted this verse. And they both said, the church has no idea of the love the Father lavishes on us.

What if my problem is that I'm not believing that God really does lavish such incredible love on me? What if I've been resisting it all along? What if God His graces and forgiveness is far greater than what I've been believing? What if I am absolutely loved and adored, even after I sin, not for anything I've done, but because of what He did, on the Cross?

I wasn't committing any large sins at this time. I do think that occasionally sickness is tied to sin.

1 Corinthians 11:29-31 NKJV — For he who eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. So in the case of these Corinthians, it would do them no good to teach the finished work of the Cross, or the high priesthood of Christ, because that isn't their problem. Their problem is they have sin in their lives, and until they repent of their sin, their health won't be getting any better.

I didn't know it, but I was charging God: "No, You didn't forgive me. Jesus did not pay for all of my sins. Not for my sin of unbelief where I gagged myself. ... but please heal me anyway." God did not want to heal me with such an attitude in me. I was using my circumstances as a measure for whether I was loved and forgiven, instead of looking to the Cross to see whether my sins were paid for.

What would have happened if she never shared her dream with me that morning, I didn't know. Would God have cut me off in unbelief? Would He chase after me to get me to believe again? I don't know.

I hear all these messages on different virtues of the Christian faith, on different morals a Christian should have. I thought there must be some moral where I am lacking or some sin that I am doing, that all these problems have come to me. But no, I wasn't believing what the Cross speaks over me. I had been studying Hebrews during this time. It says so much about the blood of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ, and the high priesthood of Christ. And not until the 12th and 13th chapters does it get practical. And I wondered, maybe churches are missing the point. Maybe the cross is the Christian message. But who am I to think that I understand the Bible better than the pastors of today? And so it was difficult for me to worship Christ for the finished work of the cross, because I thought there must be much more God wants me to do for Him to be satisfied with me. "Surely my problems have come upon me because God isn't happy with me because I'm failing to do certain things." But this is wrong.

Galatians 2:20-21 NKJV — "The life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. "I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

At the same time, I fear that this message will not help many in the church because they have not seen the gravity of their sins. They don't see how precious the message of Grace is because they don't see how much they need it. They don't see what they deserve to have. And they don't see their sinful nature. And they don't see their total inability to rid themselves from their sinful nature. People didn't like being told these things. But if you don't see them, then the message of the cross and the grace of Christ will not be as meaningful to you. And they won't have as much effect on you.

You've got to stay in this place. If you say, "Cool message! I'm going to go watch TV and have a lot of fun", then you aren't abiding in Christ. And you have turned to the flesh. You aren't acting like you have been crucified with Christ.

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My problem in 2013-2016 was that I was calling God a liar about His testimony about Jesus.

1 John 5:10-11 NKJV — He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son.

If this book has helped you at all, please give it to someone that can benefit from it. Or tell them where they may read it for free. It is available at:

End